

BUSH'S WAR ON DEMOCRACY ■ ILLEGALS PROTEST, SENATE CAVES

APRIL 24, 2006

The American Conservative

ROOM OF HER OWN



Beyond Glass Ceilings
and Desperate Housewives

Kara Hopkins

DEMOCRATIC DELUSIONS

James Payne filled his article "Election Fraud" with a fraud of his own: he plastered it full of the oxymoron "stable democracy" (March 13). He has apparently been taken in by the pundits who refer to the U.S. as a democracy.

Here is the definition that was included in the 1928 handbook distributed to U.S. Army officers: "DEMOCRACY: A government of masses. Authority derived through mass meeting or any other kind of 'direct' expression. Results in mobocracy. Attitude toward property is communistic—negating property rights. Attitude toward law is that the majority shall regulate, whether it be based upon deliberation or governed by passion, prejudice or impulse, without restraint or regard to consequences, in demagogism, license, agitation, discontent, anarchy."

This sounds far from stable and is not a desirable form of government.

MARV GRAHAM

West Columbia, S.C.

STILL WAITING FOR THAT TAX REFORM BOOK

Bruce Bartlett writes that he was dismissed from the National Center for Policy Analysis (NCPA) for writing the book *Impostor* (March 13). It's not true. Bartlett was not terminated for criticizing Bush administration policies. In fact, Bartlett was told that he could criticize any and all Bush administration policies, provided he did not personalize his criticisms and use highly insulting language.

In *The New York Times Magazine* (Oct. 17, 2004), Bruce was quoted as saying: "George W. Bush is so clear-eyed about Al Qaeda and the Islamic fundamentalist enemy ... because he's just like them ..." Shortly afterward, Bartlett met with NCPA President John C. Goodman and Board Chairman Pete du Pont and agreed to refrain from personal, insulting attacks against any politician. He betrayed that agreement by writing a book that referred to President Bush as an "impostor," "betrayor," and other colorful insults.

The NCPA paid Bartlett \$170,000 per year and drastically reduced his workload so that he could write a book on tax reform, planned to be released about the time of the president's tax reform commission report last year. Finally, more than 11 months after Bartlett agreed to begin writing the book on tax reform, for which he had furnished us with an outline, Bartlett met with Dr. Goodman and presented him with the finished manuscript of *Impostor*. Rather than write the book Bartlett promised and we paid for, he had taken a \$160,000 advance from his publisher and written *Impostor*.

The release of Bartlett's book was well-timed. It's a boon for the talk-show circuit and gives Democrats and disenchanted conservatives a launch pad for venting their discontent with the Bush administration. But to position Bartlett as a wounded crusader who sacrificed his job to tell the truth is misleading.

RICHARD W. WALKER

Senior Vice President

National Center for Policy Analysis

Dallas, Texas

Bruce Bartlett responds:

Richard Walker does not know why I was fired. He only knows what John Goodman told him after the fact. John made it clear to me that the only reason I was being fired was because my criticism of President Bush threatened NCPA's fundraising from its Texas Republican donor base. Subsequently, Goodman has stated on the record that he has no substantive disagreement with what I wrote in my book.

NCPA sacrificed me and its intellectual integrity for money and nothing else. The reason for all this is simple. Goodman and his wife, who is also on the payroll, are extremely well paid. According to the organization's latest 990 form, John alone made close to \$500,000 in 2004, and his wife Jeanette made close to \$250,000. Many organizations far more effective than NCPA run on total budgets less than this.

The idea that I was not doing my job is ludicrous. After I cut back my column from twice a week to once a week, I was still producing as much as the entire rest of the organization. According to an independent study, I was responsible for 70 percent of NCPA's national press coverage.

BRUCE BARTLETT

Great Falls, Va.

HOMELESS INTELLECTUAL

Thank you for Jeremy Beer's superb piece on Christopher Lasch (March 27). I have always admired Lasch as one of the most insightful commentators on modern American society and have wondered why he has been so consistently overlooked. *The Revolt of the Elites and the Betrayal of Democracy*, in particular, is one of the most important books of the last 20 years.

Perhaps, as Beer duly notes, when you do not fit neatly on the normal Left-to-Right political spectrum, you wind up without an intellectual home and no one knows where to find you.

JOHN K. DIRLAM

Wellesley, Mass.

TAKE THAT, TAC

As a leftist of long standing, I decline to accept the leadership you wish to impose upon me ("Hillary the Hawk," March 27). Hillary Clinton is a creature of the DLC, that GOP core at the Democratic Party's heart. I'd prefer the leadership of Richard Nixon to hers.

In revenge for this insult, I shall continue to call George W. Bush a conservative.

CLIFF STORY

Murfreesboro, Tenn.

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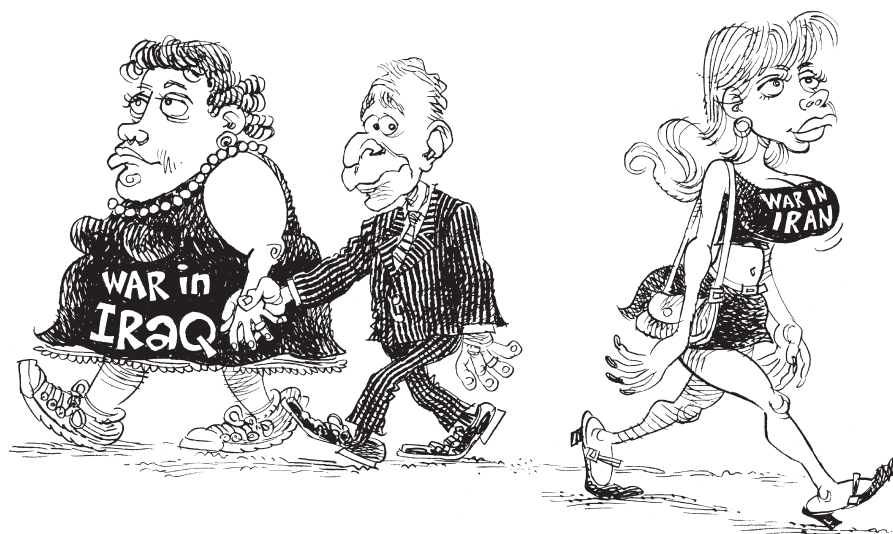
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[MEDIA]

AN AMERICAN INTEREST

At some point during their socialization process, prominent Americans learn that it is wiser not to discuss the Israel lobby at all, and certainly not at a length. Occasionally a retiring senator or general will blurt out that passionate attachment to one country in the Middle East harms America's broader national interest; ritualistic expressions of shock and horror follow, and the luminary meekly apologizes for being misunderstood, his reputation no better for the enterprise.

Perhaps because the U.S. may be on the verge of war against the entire Arab world, plus Iran—and Israeli leaders are urging Washington to Attack! Attack!—there appears a greater urgency to question what is going on. John Mearsheimer, a leading international relations scholar at the University of Chicago, and Stephen Walt, the dean of the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard, have authored a comprehensive and uncompromising analysis of the Israel lobby in *The London Review of Books*. The authors write: “For the past several decades, and especially since the Six-Day War in 1967, the centerpiece of US Middle Eastern policy has been its relationship with Israel. The combination of unwavering support for Israel and the related effort to spread ‘democracy’ throughout the region has inflamed Arab and Islamic opinion and jeopardised not only US security but that of much of the rest of the world. This situation has no equal in American political history. Why has the US been willing to set aside its own security and that of many of its allies in order to advance the interests of another state? One might assume that the bond between the two countries was based on shared strategic interests or compelling moral imperatives, but neither explanation can account for the remarkable level of material and diplomatic support the US provides.”



The essay continues for 42 pages, documenting the exceptional level of support the U.S. gives Israel, and the many instances in which the Jewish state has hardly behaved like an ally, and then analyzes the interlocking institutions that make up “the Lobby” that guarantees American support. There are surely points to quibble with here and there, but the overall impact of the document is extraordinary and all the more important coming from academics of considerable eminence.

The authors rightly claim that Israel is a legitimate state, deserving of American backing. Their quarrel is with the degree of that support. The extent to which America caters to Israel's wishes, at the expense of its own, is remarkable and worthy of explanation.

The reaction has been severe—and may heat up further. Major donors have threatened Harvard. The *New York Sun* contacted David Duke and got him to “endorse” the essay in order to smear Mearsheimer and Walt without actually having to engage their facts and argument. The *Wall Street Journal* ran a column maligning the piece, all the while claiming it would attract only ridicule. The ADL's Abe Foxman is waiting to see if the essay garners more attention in the mainstream media. Warns Foxman, “we will have to attack it with greater vigor.”

At this moment it seems possible that Mearsheimer and Walt will ignite a debate that should have been taken place years ago—one that occurs behind closed doors in Washington all the time but hardly ever in public. If Mearsheimer and Walt succeed in dragging this topic into the open, where Americans can debate it freely and without fear, they will have performed a singular public service, a deed of truly historic importance.

[IMMIGRATION]

SENATE OPENS DOOR

With the polls showing overwhelming public support for tighter immigration control, nothing would seem more calculated to turn Middle America against the open-borders crowd than the sight of hundreds of thousands of illegal aliens angrily asserting their “right” to remain in this country. Protests against the strong enforcement bill passed by the House in December brought out 500,000 in Los Angeles alone. While there were more American flags on display than at the anti-Proposition 187 demonstrations of the '90s—on the advice of organizers, no doubt—all the Mexican flag-waving seems likely to generate an anti-illegal backlash.

Unless you are a member of the Senate Judiciary Committee, that is. They eagerly complied with the illegals’

demands by gutting enforcement provisions and prying the borders open even further.

The language regarding aiding undocumented migrants was diluted in response to canards about soup-kitchen workers being hauled into jail for giving bread to illegals. An amendment was adopted making illegal presence a misdemeanor. And the committee voted 12 to 6 for an amnesty grab-bag. Included in the Senate legislation: a plan to give illegals a path to citizenship, a new agricultural temporary-worker program, an increase in visa caps for alien nurses, and an additional 400,000 guest workers per year.

As the Center for Immigration Studies' Mark Krikorian pointed out, in the House, Republicans united behind enforcement while the Democrats divided; in the Senate, the Democrats were unanimously for amnesty while Republicans split. But there was a more important difference—the congressmen listened to the American people, while the senators capitulated to the mob.

[OCCUPATION] **FACE IN THE CROWD**

Republicans secure in their partisan cocoons continue to maintain that Iraq is transforming into a democratic Disneyland. Those less vested in the vindication of the Bush Doctrine note the rising chaos, though after three years of grim news it's easy to become anesthetized to the carnage that still marks daily life.

But a recent *New York Times* story caught our attention. It told of roaming Shi'ite death squads, taking vengeance on their Sunni neighbors with impunity. "The period from March 7 to March 21 was typically brutal," Jeffrey Gettleman reported from Baghdad. "At least 191 bodies, many mutilated, surfaced in garbage bins, drainage ditches, minibuses and pickup trucks." But it wasn't the evidence of a deepening Shi'ite-

Sunni divide or the senseless of the violence that had us recalling the piece days later. It was the story of one man, Mohannad al-Azawi.

Mr. Azawi, 27, ran a pet shop in southern Baghdad and lived with his parents. He wasn't religious and didn't follow the news. His passion was his birds: nightingales were his favorite. He was feeding them on what seemed a usual March morning when three carloads of gunmen pulled up to his store and dragged him out. Azawi's body was found the next day—bound, tortured with an electric drill, and shot.

From far away, it's easy to recite the language of liberation. But on the mean streets, the results of our policies aren't always so charitable. Next time a man in Washington speaks of cakewalks and crowds throwing flowers, we would do better to think of nightingales and power tools and account in advance for the forces our benevolence may unleash.

[CULTURE] **BANNING THE BUNNY**

When a St. Paul City Council secretary arranged a stuffed bunny and a few pastel eggs into an Easter display, proselytizing city hall was probably the last thing on her mind. But the city's human rights director decreed that the decorations come down because apparently rabbits are now Christian symbols. Or perhaps the Kwanzaa crowd needs time to invent a parallel spring festival so that equivalent kitsch can be added to make the display suitably multicultural.

No citizen had complained, but according to council president Kathy Lantry, "As a government we have a different responsibility about advancing the cause of religion, which we are not going to do." That coloring eggs constitutes an act of worship will come as a shock to countless retailers, but St. Paul has a bigger problem: they're going to need to rename their city. ■

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Conservative Crack-Up

Is George W. Bush a conservative? In the title of his book, *Impostor*, Bruce Bartlett sums up his view of the claim that George Bush is the great conservative of the

Baby Boomer generation. In *Rebel-in-Chief*, Fred Barnes contends that Bush is redefining conservatism and has, in his brilliance and boldness, often surpassed the gold standard, Ronald Reagan.

At the heart of the clash between the authors lie colliding views of what constitutes conservatism in 2006.

What does it mean to be a conservative? And if George Bush has governed as one, how do we explain his collapsing support, when the economy is growing at 4 percent and the Dow is back over 11,000? Is 60 percent of the nation rejecting conservatism? Or just George Bush?

Consider three issues on which conservatives yet remain united: judges, taxes, and sovereignty.

In nominating judges who reject the activism of the Warren Court and its progeny, Bush has a record superior to that of any president in modern times. Justices Roberts and Alito put him within one justice of succeeding where his predecessors since Ike have foundered or fallen short.

On taxes, Bush peeled back marginal rates and rolled back U.S. revenues below 17 percent of GDP.

On sovereignty, Bush's rejection of the Kyoto treaty on global warming and his refusal to submit U.S. armed forces to the jurisdiction of the International Criminal Court have the backing of conservatives and also the nation.

On these three crucial issues, where the Right remains united and Bush has delivered, he seems to have succeeded with the country.

It is on four issues where no conservative consensus exists, and where populists are in open rebellion, that the old Reagan coalition has shattered: trade, immigration, foreign policy, and Big Government.

Bush's failure to veto a single bill, the soaring sums for social spending, the deficits of 3-4 percent of GDP in good times, have demoralized pay-as-you-go Republicans. The question for the Right is: are we still fiscal conservatives? Do deficits matter? Is a balanced budget in a growing economy the only course consistent with political principle?

Conservatives are split also on free trade and globalism. Always have been. In 1962, the diehards who opposed JFK's Trade Expansion Act were named Thurmond, Goldwater, and Prescott Bush.

But in Middle America, the loss of three million manufacturing jobs, a trade deficit that in January crossed the \$820 billion mark, the impending death of GM and Ford, the Wal-Martization of working America are sending the Reagan Democrats packing. Had Kerry been less of a wind-surfer and more of a populist, he could have ripped Ohio and the presidency away from Bush on the jobs and trade issue.

On immigration, there is no Middle American constituency for amnesty or bringing guest workers in to take jobs Americans cannot accept at the pay offered and still support their families. The *Wall Street Journal* may babble on about open borders and globalization, but to Americans who seek to conserve the country they grew up in, this is the

stuff of national sellout.

It is, of course, Iraq, and the growing despair over the lives lost, the soldiers wounded and maimed, the absence of an Iraqi government to take control that has taken a toll on Bush. If the Mexican War was "Jimmy Polk's War" and World War I was "Wilson's War," Iraq is surely Bush's war. Upon its outcome hangs his legacy.

Yet no matter that outcome, the day of the interventionist appears to be over. Whatever we do to or about Iran, years will pass before this country marshals another large army and sends it into some strange and hostile land to establish "democracy."

Thus, the GOP and the conservative coalition at its heart are as irreconcilably divided over many Bush policies as is the nation.

Is immigration too high? Should illegal aliens be given amnesty? Do we really need guest workers? Is a border fence essential to our security and survival as one nation and people?

Do these mammoth trade deficits matter? Is outsourcing good for us? Should we pursue the Bush democracy crusade? Is Bush's intervention in Iraq a model for America or the kind of historic mistake America must never again make?

The crisis for conservatives is that while there is no consensus, there is also no debate. John McCain, the likely successor as party leader, is as committed to the Bush policies as Bush himself. And his rivals seem to echo McCain.

What is the alternative the nation is likely to be offered by the Democrats? Hillary, who supports free trade, open borders, amnesty, the war in Iraq, etc.

Question: Is the future decided no matter what the people want? Have the establishment and corporate money killed politics? ■

[daughters of the revolution]

Room of Her Own

Feminism's long journey from "Is this all?" to having it all to being liberated by less.

By Kara Hopkins

MODERN FEMINIST LORE dates its first chapter from 1963, when Betty Friedan found the original desperate housewives vacuuming their spotless ranch houses—in high heels, natch—and heard them asking, "Is this all?"

Hate Friedan if it suits—anyone who told Phyllis Schlafly, "I'd like to burn you at the stake," would have earned the Right's ire, absent the rest of her radical cargo. The feminist matriarch's early Marxist affiliations are well documented, and her *Feminine Mystique* ranked seventh on *Human Events'* list of the "most harmful books" of the last two centuries. But she tapped sufficient angst to sell three million copies and compel millions more American women to trade aprons for power suits and kitchens for corner offices. So swift was the sea change that their daughters would not ask "Is this all?" but "Can you have it all?"—and then wonder if they wanted it.

It's fashionable in the salons of the Right to dismiss the full freight of feminism without examining its manifest. With a flick of the pen, the whole movement can be blamed for "Ruining Our Schools, Families, Military, and Sports" as it is in the subtitle of Kate O'Beirne's new bestseller. But even so ham-fisted an indictment carries a concession: this was a revolution that left fingerprints on all spheres. To caricature it as the project of a handful of hags who struck out

on the dating market is to ignore the essential question of why feminism found such fertile soil. The debating ploy is as common as it is lazy: spotlight extremists as emblematic of the whole, for if one's opponent can be cast as moronic or malicious, what need for argument? But no club is that exclusive.

Feminism certainly wasn't. Following Friedan's death last month, on her 85th birthday, Germaine Greer waltzed over her grave, telling *The Guardian*, "Betty was disconcerted by lesbianism, leery of abortion and ultimately concerned for the men whose ancient privileges she feared were being eroded. ... The world will be a tamer place without her."

That ungracious obituary wouldn't have surprised Friedan, who admitted, "I'm at odds with the radical feminists because I'm not anti-marriage and anti-family. I always thought it was dangerous to go against the idea of the family. I don't even like the phrase 'women's liberation' because that idea of being set free from everything doesn't seem right to me." No boilerplate feminist, Friedan saw men as "fellow victims," not "the product of a damaged gene" (Greer) or "rapists, batterers, plunderers, killers" (Andrea Dworkin). She didn't share *Ms.* editor Robin Morgan's belief that marriage is a "slavery-like practice," arguing instead, "I believe in marriage. I think intimacy, bonding, and families have value."

That's not to say that Friedan should be remembered as some kind of closet conservative. She did, after all, jot the fateful initials NOW—later incarnated into the National Organization for Women—on a napkin and was instrumental in founding the National Abortion Rights Action League. She memorably called American homes "comfortable concentration camps," and despite pretty words for the nuclear family was unable to hold her own marriage together. Her children would recall eating TV dinners "way beyond the recommended limit."

Both sides of the political divide could, therefore, attack Friedan for ideological impurity, and with ample cause—best evidence that the movement her question sparked was never as monolithic as critics claim. Had it been as venomous as the extreme representatives, feminism could have gained no foothold in Middle America. Housewives didn't clamor to join Valerie Solanas's SCUM—Society for Cutting Up Men—which was never more than a treehouse club. Deeper social currents were at work, so that what might have receded into the realm of curious sociology—as Simone de Beauvoir's 1949 effort had—became instead a mainstream movement populated by millions of average women.

The project began innocently enough: when surveying her Smith College classmates for their 15-year reunion, Friedan

picked up a surprising thread—a “problem that had no name.” Behind their picket fences, these pert housewives were dissatisfied and isolated, medicating their boredom with redecorating projects and Chardonnay. “As she made the beds, shopped for groceries, matched slipcover material, ate peanut butter sandwiches with her children, chauffeured Cub Scouts and Brownies, lay beside her husband at night—she was afraid to ask even of herself the silent question—‘Is this all?’” ran the opening lines of *The Feminine Mystique*.

Of course life was never that tidy, and much of Friedan’s diagnosis was overdrawn. “What kind of a woman was she if she did not feel this mysterious fulfillment waxing the kitchen floor?” A perfectly normal one who doesn’t seek the answers to existential questions in linoleum, thanks. And being “a server of food and putter-on of pants and a bed maker” is not exactly the gulag. (It was later revealed that Friedan knew little of the domestic drudgery she bemoaned: she employed a maid.)

Still the message resonated, though many who took up the torch were animated by more radical tendencies. “Don’t get into the bra-burning, anti-man, politics-of-orgasm school,” Friedan warned college students in 1970. She would go on to write in *The Second Stage*, published in 1981, that her successors had fallen into a trap “which denied that core of women’s personhood that is fulfilled through love, nurture, home.” It was this voice—not strident talk of fish and bicycles—that lured most women into believing that they could tend both home and office with equal grace.

With the advent of mechanized housework, packaged food, and public education, there was less demand for that skill set known as the domestic arts. Historically the management of a household and the raising of children were highly regarded—and fully consuming. In 1869,

Catherine E. Beecher and Harriet Beecher Stowe could write in *The American Woman’s Home*, “It is the aim of this volume to elevate both the honor and the remuneration of all employments that sustain the many difficult and varied duties of the family state, and thus to render each department of woman’s profession as much desired and respected as the most honored professions of men.” But with modern conveniences came a premium on efficiency—the market’s gateway into the private sphere, where the feminine values of tranquility, well-being, tradition, and taste had previously held sway. As the custodians of daily ritual gave in to cheaper and faster, home became recalibrated by work metrics. Previous compensations—healthy children, a peaceful refuge for her husband, a gracious table for friends—turned meager. Those who had paid no attention when Beauvoir wrote, “Woman’s work within the home [is] not directly useful to society, produces nothing. It is subordinate, secondary, parasitic,” began to entertain doubts.

A simultaneous revolution was altering men. Not long before but an age away, Robert Wright could write in *Angel in the House* of women who “tame the animal in a man and rescue his spirit from the deadening world of work.” As work took over that domestic duty, taming the animal by shackling him to a desk and burying him in a pile of paper, the ancient masculine values—heroism, independence, honor—yielded to the bureaucratic machine, which harnessed the power of traditional feminine traits—harmony, teamwork, compliance—to create a docile workforce. With his chivalric impulse thus blunted, what man wouldn’t welcome relief from the breadwinner’s burden? In the place of the angel, Philip Wylie would write of a “huge class of idle, middle-aged women” who “raped” men by binding them to humdrum lives. Far from the conserva-

tive map of the battle, these men weren’t feminism’s antagonists—or even its targets.

Boredom more than fervor rallies the best revolutionaries, and the suburban ennui Friedan identified was real. American women were not so much oppressed as dislocated. Washing machines and self-cleaning ovens lengthened their days, while sprawl quarantined them from community. These deposed queens of the domestic hive weren’t plotting the overthrow of any patriarchy. They wanted to do valuable work, the determinants of which were already being renegotiated when feminism arrived on the scene.

Friedan wrote, “[V]acuuming the living room floor—with or without makeup—is not work that takes enough thought or energy to challenge any woman’s full capacity. ... Down through the ages man has known that he was set apart from other animals by his mind’s power to have an idea, a vision, and shape the future of it ... when he discovers and creates and shapes a future different from his past, he is a man, a human being.” The implication was that private work was intellectually barren, and because this role had traditionally fallen to women, they were being denied the humanizing rigors of the public domain. Women’s studies professor Linda Hirshman would go further: “The family—with its repetitious, socially invisible, physical tasks ... allows fewer opportunities for full human flourishing than public spheres like the market or the government. This less-flourishing sphere is not the natural or moral responsibility only of women. Therefore assigning it to women is unjust.” Of course this wasn’t true, for it supposes that men at work are developing life-altering technologies or untangling theoretical impossibilities rather than doodling their way through meetings or shoveling paperwork into bureaucracy’s

maw. Moreover, it overlooks the unique capacity of men to find fulfillment in provision and women in nurture—and the responsibility of both to tend their intellectual gardens by maintaining lives beyond the demands of home and work.

Yet by attaching to existing currents and packing enough truth around a lie, feminists were able to persuade women of their degradation. Home had changed. Hearth had cooled. That diagnosis was not wrong, but the cure has nearly killed the patient, for it missed an essential truth that Friedan understood: “that core of women’s personhood that is fulfilled through love, nurture, home.” Women didn’t need to take their rightful half of the world by acting like men; they already had it simply by being women. In this, feminism pitched its battle not against men but against women. As Christopher Lasch noted in *Women and*

cific help-wanted ads are museum pieces, and pay differentials result primarily from voluntary detours from the career track. In a recent column, Susan Jacoby recalled applying for a reporting job at the *Washington Post* in 1965 and being asked to write an essay on “How I Plan to Combine Motherhood with a Career.” That’s probably actionable now.

But darker trends also attend, and while it would be difficult to trace causal lines, not all can be coincidental. With the combined work hours for professional couples with children under 18 rising to 91 hours per week, how could marriages go unaffected? The American divorce rate is nearly twice what it was in 1960, and women pay the highest price with 40 percent of divorced mothers ending up in poverty. In a controversial *Newsweek* article published in November 1990, entitled “The Failure of Femi-

1970. As Elizabeth Warren and Amelia Warren Tyagi reveal in *The Two-Income Trap*, “once they have paid the mortgage, the car payments, the taxes, the health-insurance, and the day-care bills, today’s dual-income families have *less* discretionary income ... than the single income family of a generation ago. ... Mothers now work two jobs, at home and at the office. And yet they have less cash on hand.”

But that is not even the highest cost. The dearest toll is incalculable but evident to anyone who has watched a young mother en route to daycare, cellphone jangling, briefcase gaping, while she wrangles the toddler smearing Pop-Tart on her suit and the wailing infant who started commuting at six weeks. Hers is desperation deeper than any ’60s housewife. For the draw and demands of home didn’t vanish because working women began giving at the office. They still mop the floors—at midnight. There’s an early AM scene in Allison Pearson’s silly-sad novel *I Don’t Know How She Does It* in which narrator Kate Reddy, just returned from a business trip, pounds purchased pies with a rolling pin so they will look homemade for her daughter’s school party, then hides the boxes so her nanny can’t expose her domestic duplicity to the “Mother Superiors.”

Having it all meant doing it all, for natural law cannot be vetoed: the social structure couldn’t change enough to override the intrinsic divide between private and public spheres or ignore the sexes’ yen to find more satisfaction in one than the other. Much as they pretended to be men at work, women were still mothers and wives and began to view the diminishment of these roles with some sense of loss. Equality had extracted a measure of femininity, not because women were wearing gray flannel but because, as Bette Davis confessed in “All About Eve”: “The things

IN A DEVIL’S BARGAIN, WOMEN HAVE SACRIFICED THEIR FREEDOM AND DOMESTIC SATISFACTION WHILE MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME HAS REMAINED UNCHANGED.

the Common Life, “A feminist movement that respected the achievements of women in the past would not disparage housework, motherhood or unpaid civic and neighborly services. It would not make a paycheck the only symbol of accomplishment. ... It would insist that people need self-respecting honorable callings, not glamorous careers that carry high salaries but take them away from their families.”

And it’s not as if women didn’t work outside of the home before they read *The Feminine Mystique*. In 1967, 41 percent of mothers worked. But today 72 percent do—and regularly spend their off hours clicking away at BlackBerry and taking cellphone calls.

That investment has yielded dividends: maternity leave is standard, college admissions favor women, sex-spe-

nism,” Kay Ebeling confessed, “In 1973, I left what could have been a perfectly good marriage, taking with me a child in diapers, a 10-year-old Plymouth and Volume 1, Number One of *Ms. Magazine*. I was convinced I could make it on my own. In the last 15 years my ex has married or lived with a succession of women. As he gets older, his women stay in their 20s. Meanwhile, I’ve stayed unattached. He drives a BMW. I ride buses.”

Even families that remain intact are learning a cold economic lesson: the second salary that was once something between a political statement and a rainy-day fund is becoming increasingly necessary. In a devil’s bargain, women have sacrificed their freedom and domestic satisfaction while median household income has remained unchanged in constant dollars since

you drop on your way up the ladder so you can move faster, you forget you'll need them again when you get back to being a woman. ... And in the last analysis nothing's any good unless you can look up just before dinner or turn around in bed and there he is. Without that, you're not a woman. You're something with a French provincial office or a book full of clippings."

Backlash would be too strong a word, for what came next has been less a broad reversal than a smattering of individual decisions that together suggest a shift. In October 2003, the *New York Times Magazine* published Lisa Belkin's "The Opt-Out Revolution." "Why don't women run the world?" she asked. "Maybe it's because they don't want to." Much like Friedan a generation before, Belkin looked at her fellow Princeton alumnae and found an unexpected pattern. "I know that's very un-p.c., but I like life's rhythms when I'm nurturing a child," a lawyer become stay-at-home mom admitted. "Women today, if we think about feminism at all, we see it as a battle fought for 'the choice.' For us, the freedom to work if we want to work is the feminist strain in our lives," another career girl turned mother told her.

This "choice feminism" infuriated radicals who retorted that the persistence of "gendered roles" presented a false choice, however much empowerment rhetoric a woman packed around her decision. "'Choice feminism' claims that staying home with the kids is just one more feminist option. Funny that most men rarely make the same 'choice.' Exactly what kind of choice is that?" Linda Hirshman asked in the December issue of *The American Prospect*. (Ironically, after years of using "choice" as their euphemism for abortion when they didn't view all options as equally acceptable, feminists were caught short when women who weren't advancing their agenda began using the word literally.)

The reaction revealed how far feminism had become removed from ordinary women. There had always been a totalitarian element that was less interested in individual freedom than social revolution—the notion that a woman shouldn't have the option to work outside of the home but rather the obligation. Simone de Beauvoir had written, "No woman should be authorized to stay at home and raise her children. ... Women should not have that choice, precisely because if there is such a choice, too many women will make that one." Yet her strain never found a popular audience—the *Second Sex* author famously threw Friedan's *Second Stage* across a room. (Interviewed about the book, Friedan told the *New York Times*, "Some militants repudiated all the parts of the personhood of women that have been and are still expressed in family, home and love. In trying to ape men's lives, they have truncated themselves away from grounding experiences.")

The average Janes with whom feminism first found mass appeal seem to be testing a new movement. Census figures reveal that the rate of working

Critics contend that the phenomenon is confined to a small group of affluent white women, which doesn't reverse the trend line but does reveal a poignant truth. If those who can afford it want to stay home with their children, those who cannot afford it likely do as well—and they no longer have the choice their mothers did. Warren and Tyagi write, "When millions of mothers entered the workforce, they ratcheted up the price of a middle-class life for everyone, including families that wanted to keep Mom at home. A generation ago, a single bread-winner who worked diligently and spent carefully could assure his family a comfortable position in the middle class. But the frenzied bidding wars, fueled by families with two incomes, changed the game for single-income families as well, pushing them down the economic ladder."

It is here that feminism may prove most cruel, for if the '60s found women languishing in their dollhouses—though scarcely barred from the workforce—the new century finds them no more fulfilled than their mothers but far less free.

THE NEW CENTURY FINDS THEM **NO MORE FULFILLED BUT FAR LESS FREE.**

mothers with children under age one has dropped to 53 percent from a high of 59 percent—the first decline since the indicator debuted in 1976 at 31 percent. While scarcely a revolution, the trend prompted *Business Week* to run "Goodbye Boss Lady, Hello Soccer Mom," and *Time* to devote a cover story to "The Case for Staying Home." Maureen Dowd, far more kitten than tiger, wrote in her widely noted *Are Men Necessary?* "Four decades after feminism blossomed in a giddy wave of bra barbeques, birth-control pills and unisex clothes, the ideal of having it all is a risible cliché."

Dowd writes, "Many women I know, who once disdained their mothers' lifestyles, no longer see those lives as tedious or indulgent. Now they look back with a tad of longing. Wouldn't it be pleasant to while away time playing bridge and tennis and lunching with girlfriends and eating shrimp cocktails?" Their mothers were of course more likely to iron shirts than nibble shrimp, but in this case the gloss matters more than the history. The modern fantasy of the independent woman is "Stepford," not "Wall Street"—and Dowd wasn't cast as a Taliban sympathizer for noting feminism's failure.

Publications make a ritual of printing the movement's obituary, and vultures descend from both Left and Right, though they generally pick at a caricature rather than a carcass. The Left looks through a revisionist lens and recalls feminism as a Marxist project aimed at overwhelming capitalist gender roles yet fails to admit that average women signed on to no such crusade. They were disappointed not because feminism failed to make them equal, but because in so doing it made them less female.

The Right, on the other hand, reduced feminism to a war against men—which could never have enlisted the majority of women into its ranks—and then declared victory in a fight that never was, without admitting that as conservatives they might have borne some responsibility for the sanctity of the domestic tradition.

Where does this leave women? In an experiential rather than an ideological place that only 40 years of wilderness wandering could locate. It's certainly imperfect. Many have no choice but to work—this was true in 1963 as well. But whatever wistfulness those housewives felt as their husbands headed out for the office now belongs to the past. They have been there—and back. Some have chosen high-powered careers, grateful that they can be CEOs as well as their secretaries, but they do so acknowledging that they won't have it all. Still others have decided that whatever social stigma now attached to full-time motherhood is offset by witnessing their children's first steps.

"The end of our exploring," T.S. Elliot wrote, "will be to arrive at where we started, and to know the place for the first time." In that, much as it has cost us, feminism has succeeded. Women no longer have to lie awake nights wondering "Is this all?" They have tried to have it all—and decided they are more liberated by less. ■

Insecurity With Insolvency

The president's National Security Strategy is vague on fiscal details and ignores geopolitical realities.

By Andrew J. Bacevich

TAKEN AT FACE VALUE as an actual blueprint for policy, President Bush's new National Security Strategy, which appeared last month, flunks. It fails because it disregards the first principle of strategy: the imperative of balancing means and ends. The president's latest effort to define America's purpose in the world comes chockfull of declarations, exhortations, and gaseous generalities, many of them lifted from the 2002 version of this document. But this 49-page report, which is almost entirely devoid of facts, never bothers to consider how we got into our current mess in the first place or how we're going to pay for the "Long War" that the president has contrived as the best way to get us out.

I don't mean to give the impression that the document is entirely lacking in specifics. Careful readers will learn here that the administration has launched a three-year, \$900 million initiative to provide clean drinking water to impoverished Africans. To "undertake transformational change" in the developing world, it is also contributing \$1.5 billion to the Millennium Challenge Corporation. And it's kicking in \$1.2 billion for the effort to reduce the incidence of malaria worldwide. What the National Security Strategy does not note is that the combined spending on all of these worthy programs equals the amount we're pouring down the rat hole known as Iraq every two weeks. In fact, anyone interested in the current or projected

costs of the Iraq War, or of the Afghan War for that matter, will have to look elsewhere. The strategists inhabiting the White House do not bother themselves with such trivialities.

War costs are not the only figures that this document delicately overlooks. Readers of the National Security Strategy will find no mention of U.S. government indebtedness, currently hovering above \$8.3 trillion, including an increase of \$1.1 trillion since the Republican Party gained control of the executive and legislative branches in 2001. Similarly, the authors of this document offer no data on U.S. trade relations, although last year's current accounts deficit topped \$800 billion, over 7 percent of the nation's GDP. The numbers for 2006 promise to be worse still, but you won't learn that from White House strategists. Although balancing the federal budget once ranked as a core Republican value—remember Ike's promise of "security with solvency"?—the Bush team does not trouble itself with such irksome details. The National Security Strategy is silent on the size of the federal deficit, which last year came in at a whopping \$427 billion.

Now that President Bush has acknowledged the country's addiction to oil, one might imagine that trends in U.S. petroleum imports or data on domestic oil reserves would figure as matters of strategic interest. The president's top national-security thinkers

apparently disagree: energy issues get dismissed with the wave of a hand.

Nor does the report offer any specifics about the current status of America's armed forces. In 2005 the U.S. Army experienced its worst recruiting year in a quarter-century. Out of a population of some 290 million, the Army had a goal of persuading 80,000 Americans to serve. Despite plenty of bucks for advertising, the offer of generous bonuses, and the loosening of enlistment standards, recruiters still came up nearly 7,000 volunteers short. Relevant to the long-term prospects of the Long War? One might think so, but the authors of the new strategy have other views. They don't even mention the recruiting woes.

These omissions matter. Shortfalls in dollars, resources, and soldiers suggest that American power just might have limits—but that's the one thing that the Bush administration's strategists will not admit: doing so would oblige them to curb the president's outsized ambitions.

THE NEW NATIONAL SECURITY STRATEGY GOES OUT OF ITS WAY TO IGNORE THE PAST. WHERE HISTORY FIGURES AT ALL, IT DOES SO ONLY ON THE MARGINS. EVEN THEN, IT'S A SELF-SERVING AND SANITIZED VERSION OF THE PAST.

Lord Rutherford famously remarked in the 1930s, "We're out of money; it's time to think." The White House finds it easier to pretend that the supply of money is endless, thereby obviating the need for thinking altogether. Instead of strategy—which implies choices—the president's national security team offers pompous bloviation, warning against the evils of "isolationism and protectionism, retreat and retrenchment," vowing that the United States will "shape the world, not merely be shaped by it," and reaffirming America's commitment to the "goal of ending tyranny in our world."

How are we to explain this propensity for moralistic huffing and puffing, this posing of fraudulent alternatives, these claims of vast redemptive responsibilities? Such tendencies reflect what has come to be the central defect of American statecraft, namely, an unwillingness to deal with the world as it actually is rather than as we might like it to be. Even before 9/11, political elites in the imperial capital displayed a troubling inclination to evade reality by asserting a capacity to transform it. Recall, for example, Bill Clinton chanting the wonders of globalization and his fatuous assurances that utopia waited on the far side of his "bridge to the 21st century."

The events of 9/11 only accentuated this tendency, particularly as it pertains to America's relations with the so-called Islamic world. Before long, ideological fervor had all but completely eclipsed human experience as the foundation of George W. Bush's worldview. Rather than consider the possibility that our

own mucking around in other people's business might have contributed to our troubles, the president found it much easier to issue grand pronouncements touting the onward march of democracy and America's determination to satisfy the yearning of Muslims everywhere to be free.

The ideologues who inhabit the upper reaches of the Bush administration can't deal with the actual record of that human experience, which is fraught with ambiguity and has no predetermined direction. In particular, they can't deal with the actual record of American history, in which the United States has

sought and used its power for purposes not always supportive of peace, liberty, and the well-being of humankind.

Drenched in ideological claims, the new National Security Strategy goes out of its way to ignore the past. Where history figures at all, it does so only on the margins. Even then, it's a self-serving and sanitized version of the past.

Thus, for example, the authors of this document reduce the story of the 20th century to "the triumph of freedom over the threats of fascism and communism." This conveniently selective interpretation of the century just concluded fits nicely with the administration's hopes of having freedom's triumph over Islamic radicalism define the century just begun. But it does not comport with the way that Iranians, Iraqis, and Kurds, not to mention Afghans, Palestinians, and Pakistanis, recall that era. As they remember the 20th century, its defining features were not liberation and uplift but exploitation, manipulation, and betrayal at the hands of foreigners. If by no means ranking first among the exploiters, the United States did not exactly keep its skirts unsoiled either.

Are we obliged to endorse Muslim claims of being innocent victims of Western imperialism? Obviously not. International politics allows no room for innocence. But any strategy that disregards their version of history and that airbrushes our own past transgressions is doomed to fail.

The claim coming out of the White House of late is that members of this administration have learned much from the experience of the past years. Based on the evidence offered by this latest manifestation of strategic thinking, they have learned next to nothing. ■

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Coalition of the Too Willing

Despite the demonstrable folly of the Iraq War, Bush will find no shortage of allies if he turns his sights on Iran.

By John Laughland

WHAT HAS HAPPENED to the Europeans? As the third anniversary of the invasion of Iraq has come and gone, a new attack on Iran seems to loom. President George W. Bush has said that Iran is an issue of “grave national security concern,” which is diplomat-speak for “we might attack it.” Washington’s and Tel Aviv’s desire for regime change there is well known, and neither state has ruled out air strikes.

Seymour Hersh and others say that inside the Pentagon everyone admits that secret plans are being drawn up for an attack on Iran’s nuclear facilities. This all comes after a long period in which the Europeans have been trying to reach a diplomatic solution to the crisis and to avoid a military one. And yet the reaction from the so-called anti-American Europeans to the apparent likelihood of another American war in the Middle East has been deafening silence.

Of course there was never any chance that London would dissent from Washington. Although public opinion in Britain, on both Left and Right, is as febrile in its hostility to George W. Bush as it is in France, Italy, or Greece, the entire British political class is in the grip of a fiercely ideological belief in the absolute inviolability of the Atlantic alliance. It is obvious that Tony Blair will enter history as the prime minister who stamped out what few embers of independence still glowed in the ashes of British diplomacy, but the new opposi-

tion Conservative front bench team is trying to be more Blairite than Blair in foreign affairs as well as in domestic.

In a truly hallucinatory act, the Tory shadow foreign secretary made a special pilgrimage to Washington in February to arrange a future meeting between the new leader, David Cameron, and George W. Bush—a man who is held in as much contempt for the Iraq War in Britain as he is in the United States and the rest of the world, now more than ever. It is difficult to think of any act better calculated to make the electorate despise the Tories even more than it already does, and one is reminded of the suicidal loyalty with which tiny bands of fanatics from all over Europe converged on the ruins of Berlin in the spring of 1945 to immolate themselves on the altar of Hitler’s *Götterdämmerung*.

The same goes for Italy, where there is a consensus within the political class on the need to remain friendly with the Americans, even though this is precisely the opposite of the view held by the electorate itself: Silvio Berlusconi has had to fight public opinion tooth and nail to ensure that Rome continues to support the United States in Iraq and elsewhere.

But what about Paris and Berlin? In 2003, France and Germany famously opposed the attack on Iraq. Paris forged an anti-Washington alliance not only with Berlin but even with Moscow. But although the ancient roots of Anglo-Saxon Gallophobia were then tapped, as the neocons railed in fury against perfid-

ious France, the greatest surprise was in fact the behavior of the Germans. Facing a difficult election, then-Chancellor Gerhard Schröder struck a chord that had not been heard in German politics since the late 1940s when the Social Democrat leader Kurt Schumacher had opposed both European integration and the burgeoning hegemony of the U.S. Schröder’s decision to overturn 50 years of German loyalty to the U.S., and his clever articulation of the German public’s visceral hostility to the Iraq War, were the catalyst for the explosion of a curiously German fusion of resentment and preachiness: a people that for two generations had been force-fed pacifism and anti-militarism with its mother’s milk now reasoned that the fact that it had been so uniquely evil in the past meant that it had a unique right to teach the rest of the world moral lessons about the dangers of war in the future.

However, those heady days have now passed when the Franco-German stance against the war elicited the paranoid front-page splash in *National Review* in February 2003, “Putsch! How to Defeat the Franco-German Power Grab.” Instead, the European political class seems to be contemplating the possibility of an attack on Iran with resignation, or even enthusiasm. Those countries that opposed an attack on Iraq in 2003 are now saying that they will support one on Iran.

In February 2006, the new Chancellor Angela Merkel dusted off the old one-

size-fits-all neocon argument about appeasement and said that the mullahs in Tehran were like the Nazis in the 1930s and that the world had to learn the lessons of Munich. (For good measure, she travelled to the Bavarian capital to make these remarks.) She had already flown to Washington to see George W. Bush in January in order to stress trans-Atlantic opposition to the Iranian nuclear program. The French president, Jacques Chirac, meanwhile went even further. In a keynote speech delivered at an air force and naval base in Brittany in January, Chirac said that France would herself contemplate nuking the Iranians if necessary. “The leaders of states,” he said, “who would consider using, in one way or another, weapons of mass destruction, must understand that they would lay themselves open to a firm and adapted response on our part. And this response could be a conventional one. It could also be of a different kind.”

TO SOME EXTENT, THE **FRANCO-GERMAN OPPOSITION** TO THE UNITED STATES OVER IRAQ WAS IN ANY CASE **A CHIMERA**. IT HAS RECENTLY EMERGED THAT **GERMAN SECRET AGENTS WERE ACTIVE IN BAGHDAD** IN THE RUN-UP TO THE **IRAQ WAR**.

To some extent, the Franco-German opposition to the United States over Iraq was in any case a chimera. It has recently emerged that German secret agents were active in Baghdad in the run-up to the Iraq War. The allegation has not been satisfactorily refuted that they actually helped the Americans determine their military targets. It has also been recently alleged that Saddam's Foreign Minister Naji Sabri was not only the primary source for the tales about weapons of mass destruction but also that he was working for French intelligence as well as for the CIA. These reports imply either that elements are at work within the French and German

secret services that are under the control of someone other than their respective governments or that the governments themselves were playing a clever double-game for public consumption.

Whatever the truth, the fact is that both the Chirac and Schröder governments moved swiftly after the invasion of Iraq to repair the damage done to their relationship with George W. Bush. In September 2003, Germany under Schröder agreed to increase its troop presence in Afghanistan in order to take some pressure off the American armed forces in Iraq, while in 2004, Chirac's government boasted of its co-operation with Washington in the overthrow of the Haitian president, Jean-Bertrand Aristide. So much for the creation of a new anti-American geopolitical bloc.

This return to normal was consolidated in September 2005 with the election of Angela Merkel. Her victory was achieved only with massive campaign-

the German conservatives under Mrs. Merkel was essential so that Germany would “normalize” its relationship with Washington and not concentrate its foreign policy priorities on its European partners (i.e. France) alone.

Although Merkel's Christian Democrats now govern in coalition with the Social Democrats—because their victory was by such a narrow margin—the very first issue they negotiated with their former opponents in the contract defining the terms of their Grand Coalition was foreign policy. In November 2005, both parties agreed to dissolve the Paris-Berlin-Moscow axis that had been built by Schröder (himself no longer in government) and to adopt instead an overtly hostile attitude to President Putin in Russia.

And what about the people? Here, too, it seems that there is little chance of any strong European opposition to an attack on Iran. The issue is not debated with anything like the intensity with which the attack on Iraq was argued over in 2002 and 2003. One can hazard various reasons for this. The first is that war against Iran remains only one possibility among others, whereas the month-long build-up of troops in Kuwait made it obvious that an attack on Iraq was inevitable, even when Tony Blair and George W. Bush pretended that no decisions had been taken. The second could be that there has been a very substantial degradation in relations between Christians and Muslims in Europe, following the assassination of a prominent Dutch film director by a Muslim fanatic in November 2004, the bomb attacks in London in July 2005, the largely Muslim riots in France later in 2005, and the riots and violence generated by the Danish cartoons of the prophet Mohammed in 2006. Unlike Iraq, Iran is an Islamic republic and therefore likely to attract fewer friends in Europe in the current climate.

There is, however, a third possibility—the most depressing of all. Opposition to the Iraq War caused one of the most important mass movements in recent European political history. Between one and two million people marched against the war in London in February 2003, and the war elicited the biggest ever rebellion by British members of Parliament against their own government. Huge marches were held in the other European capitals on many other occasions. In previous ages and in other circumstances, such vast numbers of politically motivated people in the streets could have generated a revolutionary situation, or at least exerted very substantial political influence on the government of the day: a contributory factor to the downfall of Margaret Thatcher, for instance, was the rioting against the poll tax in 1990.

But these marches and these protests achieved precisely nothing. Tony Blair and the other pro-war European leaders sailed on regardless. They managed to pull off an impressive feat of Marcusean repressive tolerance—tolerating dissent precisely to be able more easily to ignore it. The subsequent years gave rise to huge ructions in Britain, as the lies Blair told over Iraq were systematically exposed. Again, nothing happened. Blair remains in power through sheer tenacity of will and sheer brazen lying, as do the other leaders and politicians who supported the war, with the single exception of José Maria Aznar in Spain. The Iraq War, in other words, pitted public opinion against the collective decisions of the political class with an intensity seen only every few decades. Public opinion having decisively lost that battle, there seems little energy left to start another one now. ■

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Sibel Edmonds, the FBI Turkish translator turned whistleblower who has been subjected to a gag order, could provide a major insight into how neoconservatives distort U.S. foreign policy and enrich themselves at the same time. On one level, her story appears straightforward: several Turkish lobbying groups allegedly bribed congressmen to support policies favorable to Ankara. But beyond that, the Edmonds revelations become more serpentine and appear to involve AIPAC, Israel, and a number of leading neoconservatives who have profited from the Turkish connection. Israel has long cultivated a close relationship with Turkey since Ankara's neighbors and historic enemies—Iran, Syria, and Iraq—are also hostile to Tel Aviv. Islamic Turkey has also had considerable symbolic value for Israel, demonstrating that hostility toward Muslim neighbors is not a *sine qua non* for the Jewish state.

Turkey benefits from the relationship by securing general benevolence and increased aid from the U.S. Congress as well as access to otherwise unobtainable military technology. The Turkish General Staff has a particular interest because much of the military spending is channeled through companies in which the generals have a financial stake, making for a very cozy and comfortable business arrangement. The commercial interest has also fostered close political ties, with the American-Turkish Council, Turkish American Cultural Alliance, and the Assembly of Turkish American Associations all developing warm relationships with AIPAC and other Jewish and Israel advocacy groups throughout the United States.

Someone has to be in the middle to keep the happy state of affairs going, so enter the neocons, intent on securing Israel against all comers and also keen to turn a dollar. In fact, the neocons seem to have a deep and abiding interest in Turkey which, under other circumstances, might be difficult to explain. Doug Feith's International Advisors Inc., a registered agent for Turkey in 1989-1994, netted \$600,000 a year from Turkey, with Richard Perle taking \$48,000 annually as a consultant. Other noted neoconservatives linked to Turkey are former State Department number three Marc Grossman, current Pentagon Undersecretary of Defense for Planning Eric Edelman, Paul Wolfowitz, and former Congressman Stephen Solarz. The money involved does not appear to come from the Turkish government, and FBI investigators are trying to determine its source and how it is distributed. Some of it may derive from criminal activity, possibly drug trafficking, but much more might come from arms dealing. Contracts in the hundreds of millions or even billions of dollars provide considerable fat for those well placed to benefit. Investigators also are looking at Israel's particular expertise in the illegal sale of U.S. military technology to countries like China and India. Fraudulent end-user certificates produced by Defense Ministries in Israel and Turkey are all that is needed to divert technology to other, less benign consumers. The military-industrial-complex/neocon network is also well attested. Doug Feith has been associated with Northrop Grumman for years, while defense contractors fund many neocon-linked think tanks and "information" services. Feith, Perle, and a number of other neocons have long had beneficial relationships with various Israeli defense contractors.

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Where Have All the Conservatives Gone?

The Republican Party's top contenders for 2008 aren't paleoconservatives—or any other kind.

By W. James Antle III

COME 2008, who will succeed George W. Bush at the helm of a troubled Republican Party? Though the next presidential race is far off, the question is already on conservatives' minds.

The last few months haven't been kind to Republican operatives who assumed President Bush's slide in popularity would be temporary. Instead, his approval ratings have settled below 40 percent, averaging 38 percent over the last four Gallup polls, and the president appears determined to drag the rest of his party down with him. Bush remains committed to an increasingly unpopular stay-the-course position on Iraq and is actively pushing amnesty for illegal immigrants in defiance of the GOP base.

So far the grassroots have been generally reluctant to defy Bush in return. But public discontent with the White House's immigration and foreign-policy initiatives could create as many opportunities for traditional conservatives as Democrats, something Bush Republicans are beginning to sense. The president has begun sprinkling his speeches with denunciations of "isolationism." Fred Barnes declared, in the pages of *The Weekly Standard* no less, "It's a paleo moment in America."

If so, it's a moment the leading contenders for the 2008 Republican presidential nomination seem content to let pass. The field is dominated by candidates who support the Bush line on immigration and Iraq or are inclined to go even further. In a March Fox News/Opinion Dynamics poll, the top three

Republican hopefuls were former New York Mayor Rudolph Giuliani at 29 percent, Sen. John McCain (R-Ariz.) at 22 percent, and former House Speaker Newt Gingrich drawing 8 percent. Not a paleoconservative among them.

The sole Iraq skeptic, Sen. Chuck Hagel (R-Neb.), is at the bottom of the pack with just 1 percent. The Fox poll is no outlier. Giuliani and McCain lead in most surveys—in November, Rasmussen Reports had Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice joining them in the top tier—while mavericks like Hagel languish in the low single digits.

Rice isn't sounding like someone who plans to be a candidate in 2008, and Gingrich is running on the fumes of 1994 nostalgia. Giuliani and McCain are the beneficiaries of near-universal name recognition and fawning press coverage. But few of the dark horses offer paleos—or the growing majority of Americans who disapprove of Bush's handling of Iraq and immigration—much reason for optimism. Unless something changes dramatically over the next year and a half, rather than taking the opportunity to repudiate the current president's mistakes, Republicans are poised to nominate someone who favors repeating them.

If something does change, it will likely be due to one of two potential candidates. While foreign-policy realists dream of Hagel breaking out of his asterisk status, many immigration realists pin their hopes on Congressman Tom Tancredo (R-Colo.). Tancredo has graduated from House backbencher to the

leader of an effective congressional immigration-reform faction. In December, he and his allies fashioned a tough enforcement-only border-security bill that passed the House. Tancredo has been touring the country as the Senate prepares to undo his handiwork.

Tancredo is realistic about his presidential chances. He tells reporters that he would prefer to see a first-tier candidate take up the immigration issue—"someone taller and with better hair"—but is considering a run if no one obliges. "Soon we may see some of the princes in waiting jockeying to become the Tancredo of the Senate," predicts Will Adams, the congressman's spokesman.

A Senate version of Tancredo would be a welcome addition to the field, given how inhospitable many leading Republicans have been to the real one. He was excluded from the Southern Republican Leadership Conference (SRLC), with organizers citing schedule and ballot space constraints and Tancredo's office calling it "a clear snub from the leadership." "Congressman Tancredo may have been kept off the stage," says Adams. "But the immigration issue wasn't off the stage."

Hagel has also gotten a poor reception from Republican regulars. He garnered just 0.2 percent of the vote at the SRLC straw poll and is unpopular with conservative activists. Despite a solid lifetime American Conservative Union rating of 85 percent, he has been tagged with the GOP Right's favorite epithet—RINO, or Republican in name only.

"If the choice were Hillary v. Hagel, I would be tempted to vote for Hillary, even apart from my ideologue's desire to punish a bad Republican," wrote *National Review* senior editor Richard Brookhiser on the magazine's website. "This is a bogus choice, since Michael Jackson has as much chance of being the GOP nominee as Hagel."

Conservative distaste for Hagel appears to have two causes. The first is that the Nebraska senator established himself as a reliable Bush critic before he developed a reputation as a Beltway conservative in his own right. James Dobson has accused Hagel of being coy about a constitutional amendment forbidding same-sex marriage. Supply-siders fault him for telling the *Washington Post* Style section that in a presidential debate he "couldn't take that pledge" not to raise taxes. Without strong conservative credentials of his own, observers see his differences with Bush as a liability among Republican primary voters.

Hagel's second problem is that he is perceived as being too close to McCain. While the two senators are far apart on foreign policy—Hagel is known for prudent internationalism while McCain outdoes Bush in go-it-alone interventionism—the Nebraskan was one of the few senators to endorse McCain in 2000. Lumped together with his Vietnam service and disputes with Bush, the McCain clone label has stuck. George Neumayr, in a cover story for *The American Spectator*, mocked him as "Chuck McHagel," others prefer to taunt him as "the poor man's McCain."

Republican consultant Patrick Hynes, an expert on evangelical voting patterns, sees several reasons the 2008 field will probably remain a paleo-free zone. "Paleoconservatives are not organized politically and there are no political consequences for defying them," he says. "They are absolutely right that their

views on foreign policy have a long conservative pedigree, but most voters don't really care who is the purest in their political tradition."

It is true that adherents of the older strains of conservatism amount to more of an intellectual movement than an electoral one. David Brooks memorably wrote that Pat Buchanan's 1996 presidential bid—perhaps the most successful paleo political venture to date—was "as close to an intellectual's campaign as we have seen in modern politics." There is no real paleo presence among the party's state chairmen and Rolodex-wielding fundraisers. But an ambitious conservative needn't channel Russell Kirk to realize there is an incentive to move away from unpopular positions on salient issues. According to a Hotline poll, Iraq is the top reason Republicans disapprove of the president.

But the Rolodex men aren't just weeding out dissenters on the war and immigration policy. This field is strikingly weak even on basic conservative staple issues. For the past 25 years, it would have been difficult for a candidate who was outspokenly pro-choice or in favor of gay rights to mount a serious bid for the Republican nomination; Giuliani is both. McCain's record on social issues is more consistent with GOP norms, but he is distrusted by the Christian Right and despised by economic conservatives. His unsuccessful 2000 presidential campaign was widely seen as an attempt to relieve both factions of their control over the party.

This will provide some interesting insights into conservative priorities—whether they prefer war and guest workers or traditional values and small government. Some of the Right's opinion-makers have already reconciled themselves to the front-runners' moderation. In 2004, David Frum penned an op-ed for the *Wall Street Journal*, the title of which pronounced Giuliani "pro-

choice, but still the best choice." *The Weekly Standard* promoted McCain when he took a more adversarial line against the GOP establishment; his saber-rattling on Iran and talk of committing still more troops to Iraq may make him William Kristol's favorite a second time around.

Conservative outlets that are more interested in domestic policy have already started casting about for alternatives. The two favorites have been Sen. George Allen (R-Va.) and Massachusetts Gov. Mitt Romney. The smooth-talking, telegenic Romney has appeared on the covers of *National Review*, *The Weekly Standard*, and *The American Spectator* (the last with the headline, "Romney Rocks!"). The football-throwing, NASCAR-loving Allen has graced the covers of *NR* and *Newsmax*.

Both men are odd choices for conservative adulation. Until he began seriously entertaining presidential ambitions, Romney was a Northeastern moderate Republican. As recently as his 2002 campaign for governor, he pledged to "protect the right of a woman to choose under the law of the country and the laws of the commonwealth." "He has had as many positions on abortion as John Kerry has on Iraq," says Hynes.

Allen is a more conventional red-state Republican, but despite his 100 percent rating from the National Right to Life Committee, as governor of Virginia he was pro-choice in the first trimester and opposed to overturning *Roe v. Wade*. Factor in Senate Majority Leader Bill Frist (R-Tenn.), who is also tepid on social issues, and all the stronger cultural conservatives linger at the back of the pack alongside war critics and immigration reformers.

Hynes warns, "Republicans may be in real trouble with values voters." Traditional conservatives are also in real trouble if, after eight years of Bush, the best the GOP can do is even worse. ■

Defining Democracy Down

Bush's meddling in foreign elections undercuts his stated principles.

By James Bovard

GEORGE W. BUSH has been more emphatic about spreading democracy than any president since Woodrow Wilson. Yet Bush's policies have subverted elected governments, corrupted foreign elections, and tainted democracy itself. For most of the American media, however, Bush's pretensions on democracy remain sacrosanct.

When Bush took office in 2001, the U.S. already had a long history of meddling abroad in the name of foreign "self-determination." The National Endowment for Democracy (NED), a government agency created in 1983, had been involved in election-manipulation scandals in Panama, Nicaragua, Slovakia, and elsewhere. But the Bush team sharply ratcheted up both spending and the brazenness of U.S. interventions. The United States is currently spending more than a billion dollars a year on democracy promotion.

In 2001, NED quadrupled its aid to Venezuelan opponents of elected president Hugo Chavez, and NED heavily funded some organizations involved in a bloody military coup that temporarily removed Chavez from power in April 2002. After Chavez retook control, NED and the State Department responded by pouring even more money into groups seeking his ouster.

The International Republican Institute, one of the largest NED grant recipients, played a key role both in the Chavez coup and also in the overthrow of Haiti's elected president, Jean-Bertrand Aristide. In February 2004, an array of NED-aided groups and individuals helped spur an uprising that left 100

people dead and toppled Aristide. Brian Dean Curran, the U.S. ambassador to Haiti, warned Washington that the International Republican Institute's actions "risked us being accused of attempting to destabilize the government."

The U.S. pulled out all the stops to help our favored candidate win a "free and fair" election in 2004 in the Ukraine. In the two years prior to the election, the United States spent over \$65 million "to aid political organizations in Ukraine, paying to bring opposition leader Viktor Yushchenko to meet U.S. leaders and helping to underwrite exit polls indicating he won a disputed runoff election," according to the Associated Press. Congressman Ron Paul (R-Texas) complained that "much of that money was targeted to assist one particular candidate, and ... millions of dollars ended up in support of the presidential candidate, Viktor Yushchenko." Yet with boundless hypocrisy, Bush had proclaimed that "any [Ukrainian] election ... ought to be free from any foreign influence."

Though Bush perennially invokes spreading democracy to justify the invasion of Iraq, suppressing democracy was one of the first orders of business for the U.S. occupation authorities. Three and a half months after the fall of Baghdad, military commanders "ordered a halt to local elections and self-rule in provincial cities and towns across Iraq, choosing instead to install their own handpicked mayors and administrators, many of whom are former Iraqi military leaders," the *Washington Post* reported. Many Iraqis were outraged to see Saddam's former hench-

men placed back in power over them.

U.S. viceroy Paul Bremer feared that the chaos that followed Saddam's fall would not be conducive to electing positive thinkers: "In a postwar situation like this, if you start holding elections, the people who are rejectionists tend to win." And the U.S. military presence would likely be one of the first things freely elected Iraqis would have rejected.

The early suppression of popular government helped turn many Iraqis against the U.S. occupation. But, as Noah Feldman, the Coalition Provisional Authority's law advisor, explained in November 2003, "If you move too fast, the wrong people could get elected." The repeated delays of elections were partly the result of the Bush administration's lack of enthusiasm for Iraqi self-rule—as well as its fear that pro-Iran Shi'ites would win an honest election. The Bush administration only agreed to hold elections after Grand Ayatollah al-Sistani, the most powerful religious leader in Iraq, sent his followers into the streets demanding an opportunity to vote.

After it quickly became clear that pro-American parties would be clobbered, Bush authorized covert aid to Iraqi parties and politicians. However, when senior members of Congress were briefed on the plan, they vehemently objected. Bush canceled the formal plan but delivered covert aid, using back channels and undercover operators that could be kept secret from Congress as well as the American public. Seymour Hersh reported in *The New Yorker* last July, "the White House promulgated a

highly classified Presidential 'finding' authorizing the C.I.A. to provide money and other support covertly to political candidates in certain countries who, in the Administration's view, were seeking to spread democracy."

The elections that were eventually held on Jan. 30, 2005, had more in common with a Soviet-era Eastern Bloc election than with a New England town meeting. In the weeks before the vote, the U.S. military carried out Operation Founding Fathers. In Samarra, the get-out-and-vote message was broadcast from loudspeakers at the same time American troops, leaping out of Bradley fighting vehicles, raided and searched people's homes.

U.S. military convoys rolled through Mosul neighborhoods shortly after sunrise on Election Day "with speakers blaring messages urging everyone to vote," *Newsday* reported. Soldiers also passed out thousands of sample ballots. Carina Perelli, the top UN election official, condemned the role of U.S. troops.

Bush proclaimed on the day of the vote that the elections were a "resounding success" and that "the world is hearing the voice of freedom from the center of the Middle East." The American media largely parroted the official line. But pro-U.S. candidates were crushed at the polls as pro-Iranian parties took the prize.

According to Bush, democracy automatically brings peace. But the various elections and the U.S.-imposed timetables for a constitution in Iraq may have intensified religious conflicts and boosted the risk of civil war. The insurgency has mushroomed despite several national elections.

The brazenness of the U.S. military role in the January 2005 Iraqi election did not dissuade Bush from revealing a new standard for the purity of Middle East elections. On March 8, 2005, Bush declared, "All Syrian military and intelligence personnel must withdraw before

the Lebanese elections for those elections to be free and fair." The fact that Bush's comment evoked scant ridicule was testament to the docility of the American media and public.

Last year, to provide another bragging point for its "democracy in the Middle East" campaign, the Bush team decided it was time for the Palestinians to have an election. The Israelis grudgingly agreed. When it became clear that Hamas would pose a serious challenge to the ruling Fatah party, the Bush administration rushed a \$2 million program to allow the Palestinian Authority to launch 30 popular new projects just before the election this past January. Palestinians equated the Palestinian Authority with the Fatah party. The *Washington Post* reported that the last-minute spending binge included, "a street-cleaning campaign, distributing free food and water to Palestinians at border crossings, donating computers

Fatah lost in part because of its legendary reputation for corruption—of which the covert U.S. government windfall was simply one more example.

Team Bush carries on undeterred, continuing to cast elections as sacred events that automatically confer vast blessings upon a nation. Yet last June, Bush effectively urged Iranians not to vote, deriding their pending presidential election for ignoring "the basic requirements of democracy." Bush declared that the elections would be "sadly consistent with this oppressive record" of the Iranian government. U.S.-financed television and radio stations, broadcasting in Farsi, also effectively urged a boycott of the election.

The U.S. government's actions contributed to the defeat of Mohammad Khatami, a comparatively moderate reformer, and the victory of Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, a fire-breathing hardliner. Ahmadinejad's subsequent comments

BUSH EFFECTIVELY URGED IRANIANS NOT TO VOTE, DERIDING THEIR ELECTION FOR IGNORING "THE BASIC REQUIREMENTS OF DEMOCRACY."

to community centers and sponsoring a national youth soccer tournament." Some of the projects were announced at Fatah campaign rallies. A U.S. Agency for International Development progress report noted: "The plan is to have events running every day of the coming week, beginning 13 January, such that there is a constant stream of announcements and public outreach about positive happenings all over Palestinian areas in the critical week before the elections." Arabic newspapers were saturated with U.S.-paid ads hyping the generosity of the Palestinian Authority. The U.S. government role in financing the projects and the newspaper ads was kept secret from the Palestinian people. But despite the finagling, Hamas swept the election.

on Israel, the Holocaust, and other subjects sound almost Hollywood-scripted to help Washington persuade other nations that the Iranian government and its nuclear program must be suppressed at any cost.

In February, the Bush administration announced it was seeking \$75 million in "emergency" funding to promote democracy in Iran. (The U.S. government was already spending \$15 million or more, along with unknown amounts of covert spending to destabilize the government.) The new funds would be dabbled out for expanded TV broadcasts, scholarships for Iranians to study in America, and the fostering of independent media. This last goal is a hoot, considering the uproar over the ongoing U.S. program bribing "inde-

pendent” Iraqi newspapers to publish articles praising U.S. military operations.

The administration’s efforts seem geared far more to domestic strutting than to the survival of Iranian democrats. The profusion of U.S. money makes it far easier for the Iranian government to tar all reformers as fifth columnists and traitors. Iranian human-rights activist Emad Baghi bitterly complained, “We are under pressure here both from hard-liners in the judiciary and that stupid George Bush.” Vahid Pourostad, editor of the pro-reform *National Trust* newspaper, told the *Washington Post* that whenever the U.S. “came and supported an idea publicly, the public has done the opposite.”

It is unclear whether the Bush administration honestly wants to advance democracy in Iran or whether it is merely creating another pretext to start bombing. If the Iranian regime responds to Bush’s brazen intervention by rounding up reformers, further repressing free speech, acting even more paranoid, it may help Bush sway Americans on the need to bomb Iran in the name of democracy.

Thomas Carothers, director of the Carnegie Endowment’s Democracy and Rule of Law Project, warns that Bush policies are creating a “democracy backlash” around the globe. The U.S. has gone from being a “shining city on the hill” to championing barbaric practices that civilized nations have long condemned. While many Americans seem to pay attention only to Bush’s idealistic invocations, foreigners are not as gullible.

The administration seems to have learned nothing from its democracy debacles of the last four years. But perhaps the rhetoric has all been a ruse. Perhaps invoking “democracy” is simply a smoke-screen in pursuit of the neoconservative goal of “benevolent global hegemony.” ■

James Bovard is the author of the just-published Attention Deficit Democracy and eight other books.

Lost in Translation

Open borders, closed minds

By Marcus Epstein

AT FIRST GLANCE, the National Capital Immigrant Coalition’s protest at the U.S. Capitol against HR 4437—a bill that would dramatically step up enforcement of laws combating illegal immigration—seemed a routine left-wing affair.

The speakers included labor leaders, Democratic politicians, clergy, minority spokesmen, the ACLU. Their speeches were predictable. America was frequently referred to as a nation of immigrants. Both legal and illegal immigrants were credited with sustaining the economy and were praised as hard workers who had strong family values. And predictably, supporters of immigration restriction were denounced as racists. The crowd was reminded that hatred is un-Christian, un-American, and above all not family value. One priest even said he was praying for congressmen who supported the bill, “because they have become atheists, because if they were Christians they would not have this kind of law.”

Kweisi Mfume claimed that not only slaves but also Asian immigrants built the District of Columbia. A congressman told the crowd, “If you are illegal immigrants, then so am I.” This wasn’t that surprising either. Politicians often go overboard when they start hyperbolizing to a rabble.

In spite of the racially diverse speakers, virtually all of the 10,000 demonstrators were Hispanics pronouncing their unalienable right to live and work in this country. That the crowd lacked African-Americans and white churchgoers to see their leaders speak from the podium

was not much of a shock either. A poll by the Pew Research Center in 2003 found that 77 percent of weekly churchgoers and 74 percent of African-Americans think that the government should do more to control who is coming into this country.

What genuinely shocked me as I walked around the west lawn of the Capitol—even with my low expectations—was how culturally alien the crowd appeared. It is not that they were anti-American Reconquistadors who wanted to take over the Southwest. There were a few signs quoting Che Guevara or Emiliano Zapata, but the overall tone to the protest was not radical. What was more striking than the demonstrator’s lack of hostility to America was their lack of affection for or even understanding of this country.

The *Washington Post*’s article described many of the protesters as carrying small American flags and accompanied the piece with a photo essay filled with Old Glory. In reality, while some of the demonstrators flew the stars and stripes, they were greatly outnumbered by the standards of various Latin American countries. One of the protesters was waving an upside down American flag. When I talked to him *en Espanol*, I realized that it wasn’t because he hated America or thought we were in distress. He was completely incognizant of how our flag is supposed to be flown. In some ways, this was worse than the flag burnings that accompanied protests against Proposition 187.

Though I could see the Capitol and the Washington Monument, I felt like I was in another country. Martin Luther King Jr. and Thomas Jefferson's names were dropped by the speakers, but I did not get the impression that the demonstrators saw themselves marching in either man's footsteps—or even knew who they were.

Most of the speeches were given in English and then translated over the loudspeaker into Spanish. Whenever a speaker delivered a crowd-pleasing line, there was utter silence until the Spanish version came. Then the throng would burst into applause and start chanting “Si, Se Puede.”—“Yes, We Can.”

Even the assimilationist clichés were in Spanish. The phrases “Somos un Pais de Inmigrantes” (We are a nation of immigrants) and “Somos Americanos” (We are all Americans) were printed on shirts and signs throughout the crowd. The few signs in English were not written in the most sparkling prose. “We Want Green Card” and “We Are Worker No Criminals” were some of the more eloquent ones.

Because the speakers extolled the crowd as great patriots, I decided to ask a few demonstrators what it meant for them to be American and why they loved this country. Unfortunately, most did not understand English. The few who did, and those who I managed to communicate with through my 202 level Spanish, knew nothing of Ellis Island, the Mayflower, or the rest of the America's multicultural mystique. One congressman quoted George Washington out of context to suggest he supported open borders. He introduced Washington as the father of this country, but after it was translated into Spanish I suspected that this was news to the majority of the crowd.

My congressman, James Moran, made it clear that all you need to be an American is a job: “You become an American

by working hard and providing for your family. By that definition, you are true Americans.” This is quite different from what he usually says about patriotism when he comes to the neighborhood barbecue every Fourth of July.

I'm sure that Congressman Moran is correct that most of the people who were there work hard and care about their families. But even most people who believe this nation is a mere proposition would argue that Americanization requires more than just being a good-hearted person.

I did not get the impression that anyone there cared about America as a nation of immigrants, a melting pot, or even a multicultural salad bowl. Instead they are making a relatively good living and don't want to go back to their home countries.

This is a completely understandable sentiment. If you can go to another nation, maintain your culture and language, live among your co-ethnics, and make a lot more money than you would in your homeland, who wouldn't want to do so? The question that not one of the speakers or protesters even attempted to address is whether America can successfully accommodate the billions of hardworking people around the world who would love to come to this country.

I have joked that to some conservatives, all assimilation means is learning English and voting Republican. Even by these meager standards, the protesters came up short. Few spoke English, and none were sporting the “Viva Bush” or “Soy Republicano” pins and bumper stickers that were handed out by the various Hispanic Republican groups at CPAC a few weeks earlier.

Over two dozen business, libertarian, and conservative groups, including Americans for Tax Reform, the Republican Liberty Caucus, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, and the National Association of Manufacturers, have stated their oppo-

sition to HR 4437, but they had no presence at the rally. In fact, the protesters and speakers were openly hostile to big business and the Republican Party. At one point, they started chanting, “Bush: Escuchan. Somos en la lucha”—“Bush: listen, we are going to fight.” Many protesters had anti-Bush posters, as if he were the driving force behind anti-immigration sentiment. There were also a number of signs endorsing Hillary Clinton *para el Presidente*. Nobody gave the president any brownie points for guest-worker and amnesty proposals. For all his pandering to illegal immigrants, they still saw him as the racist enemy.

Realizing that virtually no one there knew a word of English, a friend of mine who is interning on Capitol Hill began to speak very loudly of his desire to deport many of the people in attendance. There was no response. Then I translated, “Deseo deportar inmigrantes ilegales” and protestors shouted back—in Spanish. ■

Marcus Epstein writes from Alexandria, Virginia.

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Roe in the Balance

The progress and setbacks of the pro-life movement after 33 years of legal abortion

By Michael S. Rose

EACH YEAR on the Jan. 22 anniversary of *Roe v. Wade*, pro-lifers turn out in the nation's capital by the hundreds of thousands. At this year's March for Life, a decidedly hopeful mood prevailed despite grim weather. For the past 33 years, since the 1973 ruling in which the Supreme Court claimed that the state and federal governments lack the authority to ban abortions, the pro-abortion crowd has had the upper hand, with both the mainstream media and the courts on their side. That's changing.

High-profile abortion pushers who thrive in apoplexy mode now routinely gnash their teeth in public statements. Agitated by President Bush's new Supreme Court appointments and the wave of recent state legislative restrictions on abortion, Nancy Keenan, president of NARAL Pro-Choice America, believes it all spells doomsday for her movement. She has been sounding the alarm: *Roe v. Wade* will soon be dismantled. Yet even the apocalyptic auguring falls flat. Despite NARAL's aggressive opposition to the latest Bush nominee—the only nominee since Robert Bork on record stating he believes the Supreme Court erred in its decision on *Roe*—Keenan's troops were unable to harass Samuel Alito significantly, let alone scuttle his confirmation.

Judicial and legislative developments since the Alito hearings are enough to give NARAL heartburn for years to come. Their terror alert began on the day of Alito's debut when the high court agreed to reconsider the legality of partial-birth abortion. After being mired in

litigation for years, the law that prohibits doctors from performing the barbaric late-term procedure is expected to be upheld by the Roberts Court.

On Feb. 27, the Supreme Court ended a 20-year-old legal battle over protests outside abortion clinics. Justices ruled 8-0—Alito did not participate—that federal racketeering laws cannot be used to outlaw the presence of pro-life demonstrators near clinic entrances.

But the major political asteroid hit the next day when South Dakota became the first state in 14 years to pose a direct challenge to *Roe v. Wade*. The Senate voted 23 to 12 to prohibit virtually all abortions in the state. Even the typical exceptions for rape or incest, favored by President Bush—who said through a spokesman he does not support the ban—were rejected by South Dakota lawmakers, and doctors who perform abortions would be charged with a Class 5 felony, punishable by up to five years in prison. Before Gov. Mike Rounds even signed the bill into law on March 6, Planned Parenthood had already threatened a lawsuit challenging the constitutionality of the ban. Prepared for that eventuality, pro-life activists say they have already raised over \$1 million to fund a protracted legal battle.

Similar bans are being proposed in six other states—Mississippi, Missouri, Ohio, Georgia, Indiana, Kentucky—and the Tennessee Senate recently passed a proposal to amend its state constitution to not include a right to abortion. Further, all 50 states now have abortion-restricting legislation either on the books

or in the works in some form. Proposals in 21 states would require doctors to inform women seeking abortions that their babies will likely feel pain during the procedure. Fetal pain bills have already passed in Arkansas, Georgia, Minnesota, and Wisconsin. Other state legislatures are focusing on preventive measures such as requiring waiting periods, pre-abortion counseling, and ultrasound images before an abortion.

Understandably, pro-abortion forces fear a continued legal avalanche that will eventually give the Supreme Court the opportunity to reverse *Roe v. Wade*. Although neither Bush appointee said he would vote to overturn *Roe*, abortion proponents fear that both Roberts and Alito would add to the pro-life voices of Scalia and Thomas. That leaves a five-vote majority to uphold the precedent of *Roe v. Wade* in the unlikely event that a case comes before the Supreme Court before the retirement of Justice John Paul Stevens, who turns 86 in April, or Ruth Bader Ginsburg, 73 and rumored to be in ill health.

Ironically, Pierre's most notable critics are not the ho-hum hystericals of the pro-choice movement. The South Dakota ban has unleashed a flock of pro-life Chicken Littles decrying the Black Hills "hardliners" who, they fear, might undermine their strategy of passing less sweeping laws that restrict access. Neocon oracles like the editors at *National Review* have doomed the ban to be overthrown, the result of which would reinforce *Roe* as a "super-duper precedent." It appears that South

Dakotans and other Midwestern abortion foes are being dismissed as chaw-bacon do-gooders with little understanding of the judicial process back East.

National Right to Life and many of its local affiliates already torpedoed attempts to ban abortion in Louisiana two years ago and have now set their sights on scuttling proposed bans in Missouri and Mississippi. Those anti-ban plans and their accompanying philosophy of compromise do not sit well with other pro-life groups like the Pro-Life Action League, Human Life International, and the Thomas More Law Center. This rift is nothing new but only highlights the longstanding division in the ranks of the pro-life moment. As Notre Dame law professor Charles Rice has noted, the pro-life movement has sadly degenerated into a debate not over the question as to whether babies should be killed, but how and when we should kill them. "After all," says American Life League's Judie Brown, "every abortion is an act of murder, and the only way to honestly

choice camp do not support unrestricted access to abortion. According to a 2003 Gallup poll, two-thirds of Americans think abortion should be legal only in the first three months of pregnancy.

This shift is partly due to advances in technology. 4-D ultrasound monitors now allow a mother to see clearly that there's a human baby in her womb. Unborn babies also routinely receive blood transfusions, undergo surgical operations, and are treated medically in a variety of ways like the human beings they are. Pro-life efforts have also been buoyed by a much greater awareness of the risks abortion poses to mothers: studies in recent years have linked abortion to breast cancer and depression among other emotional and physical problems. The South Dakota bill reflected the findings of a task force report released last December: "We do not know the cost to our society" caused by "the pain and anger resulting from abortion, but we fear it is far worse than what we are able to comprehend."

abortion as directly related to sexual freedom or feminism and I no longer see it strictly as a matter of personal privacy, either. It entails questions about life ..."

Of late, many abortion-advocacy groups have turned their attention to the campaign to promote abortion-inducing drugs such as RU-486 and Plan B. They have thus far waged a successful semantics campaign by getting the media to erroneously refer to these drugs as "emergency contraception" despite the medical fact that the result of their use is often the abortion of an embryo in its earliest days of life. No reliable statistics are yet available on just how common so-called "chemical abortions" have become, but the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimated that by 2002, 10 percent of women between the ages of 18 and 24 had used morning-after pills. The same pro-life groups that oppose laws to ban abortion outright—most notably National Right to Life—refuse to condemn or campaign against chemical abortions, which would now appear to outnumber surgical abortions. Pro-life gains have not yet been as calculable on this new terrain. According to a Zogby poll, only 55 percent of Americans believe that human life begins at conception.

This is not the only life issue in which the human embryo is, in effect, the new battlefield. The major source of stem cells for experimental research purposes is embryos, which are destroyed in the process of extracting stem cells. Thus, biomedical researchers routinely manipulate and dispose of human life at their discretion, justifying their work as having laudable goals. Scientists continue to claim that embryonic stem-cell research holds promise for helping those who suffer from diseases such as Alzheimer's and Parkinson's. Yet after eight years of cannibalizing human embryos, no one has achieved any success in using this procedure for thera-

10 PERCENT OF WOMEN BETWEEN 18 AND 24 HAD USED MORNING-AFTER PILLS.

challenge the misconceived idea in *Roe v. Wade* that the child is not a person is to confront them with the precise question of who a person is." That's exactly what the South Dakota ban can do.

Tactics aside, it is important to note that the battle against abortion is being won not primarily by legislation and politics, but by public opinion, which is changing swiftly and dramatically. A September 1995 Gallup poll found that 56 percent of Americans described themselves as pro-choice compared to just 33 percent who identified themselves as pro-life. By August 1997, the 23-point gap had shrunk to just a 3-point difference and has remained in the single digits since. Moreover, many Americans who identify with the pro-

This continuing public shift in attitudes is so obvious that key Democrats like John Kerry and Hillary Clinton have embarked on a strategy to make the Left more appealing to religious voters concerned with the immorality of abortion. Liberal commentators have been reading the tea leaves, too. Not only are they advising abortion advocates to back away from *Roe* because it is ultimately indefensible, they're actually admitting abortion is an important moral issue. *Slate* correspondent William Saletan wrote in an op-ed for the *New York Times*: "It's bad to kill a fetus. You can't eliminate the moral question by ignoring it." Richard Cohen, writing in the *Washington Post*, built upon Saletan's admission by confessing, "I no longer see

peutic treatments. The only “break-throughs” have turned out to be frauds, such as when South Korean human cloning superstar Woo-Suk Hwang faked the results of his embryonic experimentation. Other false starts were announced in 1999 and 2001 by American researchers. Nevertheless, opponents of embryonic stem-cell research are still routinely dismissed as misguided religious fanatics.

The human embryo is no less the subject of experimentation in the ever burgeoning artificial procreation industry. During the in vitro fertilization process, unused embryos stored in cryogenic banks are often abandoned and left to disintegrate slowly, or may be given away for experimental purposes. As with embryonic stem-cell research and morning-after drugs, the fertility industry is mistakenly perceived by the American public as a positive good with worthy goals.

The fact that the same used to be said about surgical abortion goes to show how far the pro-life movement has advanced its goals in just the past decade. With abortion activists now perpetually enraged, liberal commentators admitting that abortion is indefensible, and left-wing politicians devising strategies to appeal to moral-minded voters, it's difficult not to conclude that the pro-life movement has reached a new pinnacle of success, despite its internecine squabbles. The tables have turned. The political fortunes of the pro-abortion lot are clearly in decline—at least when it comes to the traditional abortion debate. The next few years, however, present new challenges as the human-life debate steadily shifts its focus onto the less understood issues of biotechnology that the Left thus far seems to be winning, almost by default. ■

Michael S. Rose is Web Editor of New Oxford Review. His latest book is Benedict XVI: The Man Who Was Ratzinger.

Eminent Complaint

Developers begin to feel *Kelo* backlash.

By Steven Greenhut

BIG DEVELOPERS, retail stores and auto dealerships, bond merchants and city officials got exactly what they wanted last summer from the U.S. Supreme Court. In *Kelo v. City of New London*, the court ruled that local governments have the right to use eminent domain to take property from small-business owners and homeowners and give it to developers who promise tax and other benefits to cities that do their dirty work for them.

You could almost hear the sighs of relief emanating from the National League of Cities and the American Planning Association as Justice John Paul Stevens, writing for the majority, declared that the Connecticut city's plan to bulldoze a settled neighborhood of waterfront historic homes so that a developer could build condos, offices, a hotel, and upscale shopping “qualifies as a ‘public use’ within the meaning of the Takings Clause.”

But while the “redevelopment community” certainly got what it wanted, it also got something it never expected: a strong public and legislative backlash against the abuse of property rights, increased understanding of what eminent domain and government-driven redevelopment means for communities, and the creation of a new nationwide property-rights movement that spans the political spectrum. As an *Arizona Republic* editorial put it, “Be careful what you wish for? They had no idea.”

While not much of substance has happened so far, in terms of tough new anti-eminent-domain legislation, a sea change has taken place in public opinion. A

quiet little game has gone from the shadows, where lucrative deals are cut in closed city council session without controversy or debate, to the evening news, where the Little People openly question plans to bulldoze their neighborhoods to make way for subsidized new condos or auto malls.

Now, there's a backlash against the backlash.

“Developers Can't Imagine a World Without Eminent Domain,” the *New York Times* proclaimed in a Jan. 18 headline. The *Times* article quotes developers who are reacting angrily to critics of *Kelo*. “Bank of America agreed to join the developer Douglas Durst in 2003 in building a 54-story tower in the heart of Midtown Manhattan, giving a psychological and economic lift to a city that was still reeling from the destruction of the World Trade Center,” explained the news story. “Mr. Durst said he would not have been able to negotiate with Bank of America or other prospective tenants had the state not authorized him to use eminent domain.”

You see, some property owners held out or kept raising the price. “Once we had that ability [to use eminent domain],” he told the *Times*, “we were able to quickly come to a resolution on the two properties and meet Bank of America's schedule.”

No one doubts that eminent domain helps one party in particular transactions. The question, answered incorrectly by the nation's highest court, is whether in this supposedly free and constitutional society, it's acceptable for

government to use its power to benefit one party over the other.

Unfortunately, so many “free market” businesses don’t like to act in the free market. As soon as the market works against their interests, they turn to the government to get special favors. It reminds me of the situation with illegal immigration. You’ve heard about all those jobs Americans won’t do. Is that really true, or is it more accurate to say that Americans won’t do the jobs at the prices the companies want to pay? So the companies lobby the government to enact policies that flood the labor market, just as they use government’s power of eminent domain to obtain other people’s private property at prices they find more suitable.

The *Times* continues: “[A]round the country, developers and city officials say weakening or destroying the power to condemn property will seriously undermine efforts to rehabilitate decaying cities and might even hinder the rebuilding of New Orleans. ... Yet many developers and politicians have been loath to speak up, said Jeffrey Finkle, the president and chief executive of the International Economic Development Council, a professional group. ... ‘This issue is the third rail right now,’ Mr. Finkle said. ‘You step on it, you die.’”

Supporters of eminent domain always bring up the worst-case scenario—rebuilding in New York after the 9/11 attacks, cleaning up after Katrina, the case of the decrepit house whose owner refuses to sell, the single holdout who is blocking some grand new project. In my reporting, however, I cannot think of single hard case involving eminent domain. It is almost always used as “growth capture”—a neighborhood is on the upswing, some developer notices it and wants to build something fancy, and government officials jump in to help the developer get the land at below-market rates because the new project

brings in more tax revenues and is more to the liking of local officials with edifice complexes.

The public is learning this reality, which no doubt explains why eminent domain has become such a hot, third-rail topic.

Legislation has been proposed in more than 40 states to address eminent-domain abuses. Most of the bills are largely worthless because they still allow cities to use eminent domain when “blight” is determined. Defining blight is even easier than defining pornography; cities know it when they see it, and anything they see—peeling paint, too much urbanization, too little urbanization, lower-than-average incomes in a neighborhood, and on and on—seems to be sufficient justification to use this police power.

Nevertheless, it’s only a matter of time before substantive reform gains traction. One new federal law restricts the use of federal funds on many projects that employ eminent domain for non-public uses. And in California, an initiative is now circulating that would stop eminent domain for private uses.

SUPPORTERS OF EMINENT DOMAIN ALWAYS BRING UP THE WORST-CASE SCENARIO—REBUILDING IN NEW YORK AFTER THE 9/11 ATTACKS, CLEANING UP AFTER KATRINA.

For years, the news media have largely sided with community leaders and developers, who promise great benefits from their new projects. Victims of eminent domain have been portrayed as gadflies—or simply ignored. Certainly part of the backlash against the *Kelo* reaction is driven by frustration that the topic is now covered widely and property owners are given far more sympathetic treatment than they had been in the past.

Still, some editorialists are upset by the new anti-*Kelo* movement. The *Ari-zona Republic* editorial quoted earlier

argues that “municipal governments were heartened” by the *Kelo* decision but “had no idea” that the nation would be “ablaze with a reformist zeal to foil the use of eminent domain by local governments. ... Well intended as they may be, such changes in state law wield a nightmarish capacity to throw the operation of growing communities into a hyperexpensive chaos of legal challenges, particularly in our central cities, where rezoning is a vital tool for improvement.” The editorial’s headline says it all: “Zealous land protection efforts threaten legitimate planning.” Such arguments are sounding increasingly desperate.

“My life hasn’t been the same since June 23, 2005,” said John Shirey, executive director of the California Redevelopment Association, in another *New York Times* article. He is referring, of course, to the date of the *Kelo* decision. “Very little is being done to try and inform citizens that the *Kelo* decision had no impact on California and in most states, including diminishing any rights and protections they have as property owners,” Shirey told *The Bond Buyer*. True. The decision did not change any

laws. The Supreme Court merely affirmed the terrible state of affairs that existed before the decision.

Perhaps Shirey ought to head to Long Beach, California, where the city voted 6-0 on March 13 to condemn a perfectly nice church—not blighted, by any normal standard—so that the prime near-downtown parcel could be joined with another parcel, where a developer is building upscale condominiums. The law hasn’t changed. But before *Kelo*, congregants at the Filipino Baptist Fellowship Church would no doubt have

suffered in silence. Post-*Kelo*, their plight has become national news.

That's why Shirey and other advocates for eminent domain are having heartburn. Consider that nothing has yet to be built on the site of the New London neighborhood that was ground zero in the *Kelo* case. No one wants to be remembered as the developer who built on Susette Kelo's house. Chalk it up to the value of stigma.

Even the bond guys are getting nervous. These eminent-domain-using redevelopment projects usually are funded by debt. Those who float the bonds, and the myriad consultants and attorneys involved in this process, have one goal in mind: make the deal happen. That's how they get paid. Anything that gets in the way of the deal is bad.

A Feb. 28 report by Fitch Ratings called "Beyond Kelo: Reactions, Responses, and Credit Quality," explains that "Shortly after the decision, attempts to legislate restrictions to eminent domain powers have begun at both the federal and state levels. If these efforts prove successful and eminent domain powers are restricted to a significant degree, Fitch Ratings believes municipal credit quality could be restrained or negatively affected."

I've seen the effect of the *Kelo* backlash locally. In one open state Senate seat in central Orange County, the issue of eminent domain looms large, as the Republican candidate is one of only two Republican Assembly members statewide who refused to support eminent-domain reform. Both Democrats vying for the seat bucked their party and supported restrictions on eminent domain. Put your money on whichever Democrat wins the primary. In the city of Yorba Linda, California, residents gathered double the number of signatures needed to subject an eminent-domain-using, subsidy-rich downtown redevelopment project to a citywide vote earlier this

year. Officials wisely canceled the plan, understanding that eminent domain would certainly lose at the polls.

In her stinging dissent to *Kelo*, Justice Sandra Day O'Connor predicted, "The fallout from this decision will not be random. The beneficiaries are likely to be those citizens with disproportionate influence and power in the political process, including large corporations and development firms."

Yet nobody predicted the current fallout. That redevelopment officials and developers who abuse eminent domain are upset is a sure sign that the backlash against *Kelo* is starting to hit paydirt. ■

Steven Greenhut is senior editorial writer and columnist for the Orange County Register and author of Abuse of Power: How the Government Misuses Eminent Domain.

Our Allies, the Mullahs

On Iraq, at least, the U.S. and Iran find common ground.

By Gareth Porter

THE AGREEMENT between Washington and Iran to hold direct talks on Iraq has forged a new linkage between the Iraq and Iran crises. Hardliners in the Bush administration are resisting any linkage because they want to avoid pressure for a broader settlement with Iran. But they have already lost the battle against talks with Iran on the stabilization of Iraq. Those negotiations are likely to increase the pressure for bilateral negotiations on Iran's nuclear program and Iranian security concerns.

The convergence of the two issues is being driven both by the need of the United States and Iraqi political factions for Iranian help in resolving the sectarian violence and political deadlock in Iraq and by Iran's desire to reach a broader settlement with Washington.

The U.S. reactions to the Iranian acceptance of talks on Iraq reveal a sharp contrast in the attitudes of Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and other administration officials toward the talks. Before flying to Australia, Rice said the talks with Iran on Iraq "could be useful."

The following day, however, some administration officials began to denigrate the value of those talks. White House National Security Adviser Stephen J. Hadley said they were "simply a device by the Iranians to try to divert pressure that they are feeling in New York."

Hadley suggested that there was no need for the United States to talk with Iran at all because, "We're talking to Iran all the time: We make statements, they make statements." The same day, a "senior U.S. official," speaking to reporters while demanding anonymity, called the Iranian offer of talks "a stunt" and said Washington would participate only to avoid "criticisms that it did not do all it can do to defuse bloody tensions in Iraq." And a White House official sought out reporters to say the Iranian offer was "almost puffery."

The attacks by those associated with the administration's hard-line policy toward Iran revealed sharp differences over which is more important—isolating Iran diplomatically or taking advan-

tage of its influence within the Shi'a political leadership in Iraq to help settle the crisis there.

The Dick Cheney-Donald Rumsfeld group, whose views were expressed by Hadley and the anonymous officials minimizing the importance of talks with Iran, clearly care less about what happens in Iraq than they do about maintaining the policy of implicit, if not explicit, regime change in Tehran.

Rice and Khalilzad, however, are apparently willing to risk a weakening or breach of the policy of isolating and threatening Iran because they recognize the desperation of the sectarian-political situation in Iraq and believe Iran could help.

Since late last year, Bush has sided with Rice and Khalilzad against Cheney and Rumsfeld, when they prevailed on Bush to authorize talks with Iran on the Iraq crisis. In late December or early January, Khalilzad dispatched a message to Iranian authorities proposing co-operation on Iraq, according to the London-based Arab-language newspaper *al-Hayat*.

The Cheney-Rumsfeld group did not attack the decision then because they were confident that Iran would reject an invitation for discussions limited solely to Iraq. Iran's foreign minister quickly confirmed that belief by declaring that Iran would not agree to those terms.

Khalilzad has apparently repeated his proposal to Iran to discuss the stabilization of Iraq more recently. According to a March 12 article in the London *Sunday Times* by Lindsey Hilsum, the international editor of London's Channel 4 news, a senior Iranian intelligence official said that the U.S. invitation of talks on Iraq had been "renewed" in late February.

This time, the Iranians did not reject the U.S. proposal. Their willingness to help stabilize the situation in Iraq without any commitment to broader talks reflects the increased perception in

Tehran of a danger of military confrontation with Washington. Since the Iranian rejection of Khalilzad's earlier proposal for talks, the Bush administration has stepped up its pressure on Tehran over the nuclear issue and orchestrated a campaign to take the nuclear issue to the Security Council.

In agreeing to help the United States on Iraq, the Iranians are primarily interested in the possibility of using talks on Iraq as a bridge to broader diplomatic negotiations with Washington. The Iranian intelligence official told Hilsum that Tehran would accept the U.S. offer for talks but wanted them to be in a neutral country, hoping they would eventually lead to a dialogue on the nuclear issue as well.

In announcing Tehran's acceptance of U.S. terms for the talks, Ali Larijani, Iran's chief negotiator on its nuclear program, who is known to be close to the supreme leader of the regime, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, hinted at the desire to reach an accommodation with Washington on nuclear and other issues. "If the Americans stop their troublemaking in the region and if they examine their previous conduct and behavior, a lot of things may happen," he said.

THE IRANIANS ARE PRIMARILY INTERESTED IN THE POSSIBILITY OF USING TALKS ON IRAQ AS A BRIDGE TO BROADER DIPLOMATIC NEGOTIATIONS WITH WASHINGTON.

The hardliners in Washington are determined to avoid just such negotiations on Iran's nuclear program. No sooner had the Iranian agreement to discuss Iraq been made public on March 16 than Undersecretary of State Nicholas Burns publicly ruled out any discussions with Iran on the nuclear issue.

He asserted that any such negotiations would be "futile in view of the country's track record on the issue." But he also revealed that rejecting negotiations on the nuclear enrichment is part of the

administration's strategy of pressure on Iran, referring to its "calculation that it is better to isolate the Iranian regime."

Although the administration seeks to keep co-operation with Iran over the crisis in Iraq separate from its strategy of isolation of Iran, the evolution of the Iraq crisis may make such separation impossible. The discussions on Iraq will have to involve various political formulas that the United States and Iran could both support. Iran would be asked to help sell the militant Shi'ite parties on a settlement plan with unpalatable compromises for those same parties.

If the Iranians become more deeply involved in the internal negotiation in Iraq, and the usefulness of their role becomes widely recognized, it will certainly be more difficult for the United States to resist political-diplomatic pressures to talk with Tehran about the larger issues threatening the peace of the region—Iran's nuclear program and the U.S. efforts to isolate and destabilize the regime.

Ironically, Iran's assistance in brokering a Shi'ite-Sunni political compromise has been sought by Abdul Aziz al-Hakim, the leader of the Supreme Council for

the Islamic Revolution in Iraq, the largest party in the dominant Shi'ite alliance.

Sunni political leaders, meanwhile, have rejected the idea of U.S.-Iranian talks on a settlement, despite the fact that the Iranian support is necessary to get the Shi'ites to agree on key Sunni demands. ■

Gareth Porter is the author of Perils of Dominance: Imbalance of Power and the Road to War in Vietnam. All rights reserved IPS.

Arts & Letters

FILM

[*V for Vendetta*]

Did I Shave My Head for This?

By Steve Sailer

A FILM CRITIC would have to hate George W. Bush awfully bad to praise the ludicrous yet humorless “V for Vendetta,” in which a disguised superhero blows up the Houses of Parliament to overthrow the clerico-fascist despotism ruling Britain in 2020. Yet a majority of movie reviewers have given their thumbs-up to “V for Vendetta,” even though it is just another masochist’s fantasy masquerading as a profound political allegory from the Wachowski siblings, the *frauteurs* who were to blame for the “Matrix” trilogy.

“V for Vendetta” started out in the 1980s as a “graphic novel”—an expensive, pretentious comic book—by Alan Moore (*League of Extraordinary Gentlemen*) about how Margaret Thatcher would turn England into a totalitarian dystopia by 1997. Well, that didn’t exactly happen, so now the Wachowskis have rewritten it as a post-9/11 fable implying that President Chimp McHitler Bushton will crush all dissent Real Soon Now. Personally, I’d rather endure a Bush press conference than see this movie again.

Remember director Ridley Scott’s famous “1984” Super Bowl commercial introducing the Apple Macintosh? Now, imagine that 45-second spot dragged out over 132 minutes. In “V for Vendetta,” the Big Brother tyrant ranting about

unity and security from a vast video screen is played by John Hurt. An ambitious, deeply religious Conservative politician, he had imposed martial law in the wake of a terrorist virus attack, putting society under the thumb of fanatical Church of England bishops. (According to Google, the phrase “fanatical Church of England bishops” has never been seen before.) The government dispatched all Muslims and homosexuals to concentration camps, although the film forgets to mention how these two victimized minorities got along on the inside.

Fortunately, V, a masked mutant survivor of a government biological warfare experiment (Hugo Weaving, Agent Smith from “The Matrix”), has risen up to challenge the clampdown all by his lonesome. In his underground redoubt, he broods surrounded by banned artworks he has liberated from the vaults of the Ministry of Objectionable Material, such as Jan Van Eyck’s immortal “Arnolfini Wedding Portrait” of 1434. You might be asking: why would a reactionary Christian government ban the masterpieces of the pious past? Simple, according to the Wachowskis: because conservatives hate art.

V’s reluctant accomplice is portrayed by Natalie Portman. Best known as Queen-Senator Padmé in the recent “Star Wars” whoop-tee-doo, Portman is a graduate of the George Lucas Academy of Dramatic Arts, and it shows. A smart, pleasant young lady offscreen who sadly lacks all charisma onscreen, she ought to go do something else with her life.

Stephen Rea portrays the hangdog Scotland Yard inspector assigned to catch V. But he discovers—prepare to expire of astonishment—that the fascist regime itself actually inflicted the “terrorist” virus epidemic! You can tell that

Rea’s character will turn out to be on the side of good because he’s half-Irish, unlike all those racially reprehensible English Nazis shouting the government’s slogan “England prevails!” Eight hundred years of successful English resistance of tyranny don’t count for much in the movies because Anglophobia is one prejudice of which today’s Hollywood approves.

Although advertised as an action film, “V for Vendetta” consists of two hours of speechifying with a big explosion at the end. It’s like “My Dinner with Andre on the Hindenburg.”

Still, all that political posturing is mostly for show. Just as the “Matrix” movies were less about philosopher Jean Baudrillard’s theory of simulacra than about Carrie-Anne Moss dressing up in black leather and hurting men, the fetishistic point of this film is to imprison, torture, degrade, and shave the beautiful hair off of poor little Natalie Portman’s head.

You may have noticed that the silly but well-made 1999 “Matrix” credited “The Wachowski Brothers,” while its dire 2003 sequels referred to “The Wachowskis.” In 1999, Larry, the elder Wachowski, was living a normal life as a married man, so he had to sublimate his latent perversity into his art. Unfortunately, that blockbuster afforded him the money to transform his inner kinks into grotesque reality. He left his wife and moved in with a dominatrix called Ilsa Strix. Soon he was dressing as a woman, and rumors circulated that Larry planned to become a Wachowski sister. Unsurprisingly, the level of imagination in his movies collapsed.

Now, they are at least back to a “Wachowski Brothers” credit, but their films have yet to recover. ■

Rated R for strong violence and some language.

BOOKS

[*America at the Crossroads: Democracy, Power and the Neoconservative Legacy*, Francis Fukuyama, Yale University Press, 240 pages]

Fukuyama at the Crossroads

By Christopher Preble

IN JANUARY 1998, the Project for a New American Century issued the first of several statements calling for the removal of “Saddam Hussein and his regime from power.” Just over five years later, the signers of PNAC’s statements got their wish when the United States launched a war to liberate Iraq. It would seem to be a time for celebration, yet one of them is having second thoughts. In *America at the Crossroads: Democracy, Power and the Neoconservative Legacy*, Francis Fukuyama, a signatory not only to three PNAC statements on Iraq but also to the organization’s statement of principles, explains his intellectual journey from neoconservative true believer to skeptic. The Iraq War is at the center of this conversion. “It seems very doubtful,” writes Fukuyama, “that history will judge the Iraq war kindly.”

As a respected scholar of international relations and the author of the influential book *The End of History and the Last Man*, Fukuyama was capable of articulating either a defense or a critique of the impending war with Iraq. “Unlike many other neoconservatives,” he now explains in the new book, “I was never persuaded of the rationale for the Iraq war.” In the year prior to the invasion, Fukuyama studied the problem and concluded that “the war did not make sense.”

To the extent that Fukuyama feels at all guilty for not going public with his private misgivings, this book is an effort to set things right. His “attempt to eluci-

date the neoconservative legacy” and to explore the evolution of the philosophy into something that he can no longer support is a worthwhile and enjoyable read. But while the press is sure to focus on the fact that a member of the neoconservative inner circle has now turned on his former ideological allies, this important and insightful book is much more than a tell-all memoir of self-discovery. Fukuyama demolishes some of the central tenets of neoconservatism that led to the debacle in Iraq, but he also sets forth an alternative vision, one that he sees as both more consistent with American values and more likely to succeed in an international environment deeply skeptical of American power.

A number of his specific recommendations are commendable, including his call for “a dramatic demilitarization of American foreign policy and reemphasis on other types of policy instruments”; the establishment of “clear criteria for when we believe preventive war is legitimate”; and an end to the “rhetoric about World War IV and the global war on terrorism.”

Beyond these specifics, the book is useful in its exploration of the elements of neoconservative thought that led to the Iraq fiasco. Unlike those who see democracy-promotion and regime change as core elements of neoconservatism, Fukuyama sees Iraq as inconsistent with the philosophy espoused by the likes of Leo Strauss and Irving Kristol and therefore emblematic of the “wrong turn” taken by some neoconservatives during the 1990s.

Fukuyama traces this wrong turn to the unexpected collapse of communism, which some took as a validation of the concept of regime change. Drawing on his nuanced understanding of the unique circumstances surrounding the democratization that took place in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union in the early 1990s, Fukuyama dismantles the facile notion “that democracy was a default condition to which societies would revert once liberated from dictators.”

Liberal democracy, Fukuyama explains, is a byproduct of the process of modernization documented in his ear-

lier book *The End of History*. To the extent that liberalism “becomes a universal aspiration,” the process takes time. Crucial institutions “must be in place before a society can move from an amorphous longing for freedom to a well-functioning, consolidated political system with a modern economy.” He warns, the “democratic contagion can take a society only so far; if certain structural conditions are not met, instability and setbacks are in store.”

Some neoconservatives routinely dismiss the notion that democracy can give rise to an illiberal political order, or, worse, that the spread of democracy could pose a threat to the United States. The suggestion seemed to be a practical impossibility, akin to the sun rising in the west. But in a classified report from February 2003, the State Department’s Bureau of Intelligence and Research expressed doubts that the installation of a new regime in Iraq would foster the spread of democracy in the Middle East and warned that “even if some version of democracy took root ... anti-American sentiment is so pervasive that Iraqi elections in the short term could lead to the rise of Islamic-controlled governments hostile to the United States.”

Fukuyama taps this vein. “While there is nothing wrong,” he explains, “with being hopeful and open to the possibility of miracles” such as occurred in 1989 with the collapse of the Soviet empire, “it is another thing altogether to predicate a foreign policy on the *likelihood* of multiple near-term democratic transitions.” And yet that is precisely what his former fellow travelers have done.

Fukuyama is also effective in revealing the illogic of preventive war more broadly. He correctly notes that preventive war has always been seen as “problematic” because “it depends on being able to accurately predict the future,” especially its assumption that an extant threat will become imminent. “Preventive war cannot be ruled out as a component of an American grand strategy. But making it a central feature entails large risks and costs that are all too evident in retrospect.”

Fukuyama continues to cling to a few core neocon principles, especially the belief that "American power is often necessary to bring about moral purposes." For that power to be effective, he explains, it must be seen as legitimate. Concern for legitimacy is practically an obsession for Fukuyama, and it distinguishes him dramatically from many of his former ideological allies.

Charles Krauthammer's vision of an enduring "unipolar moment" was based on his belief that the United States would act, and be seen as acting, as the "custodian of the international system." Along these same lines, Fukuyama explains, William Kristol and Robert Kagan in their book *Present Dangers* "argued explicitly in favor of a policy of benevolent hegemony in which the United States would use its power to create a benign, peaceful, and democratic world order."

These and other advocates of war with Iraq were convinced that American power would be seen as legitimate by anyone who mattered, and they dismissed critics as anti-American and/or pro-terrorist. Fukuyama understands international opposition to the United States as rooted in more than mere mendacity or jealousy. The concept of benevolent hegemony, Fukuyama explains, was based on "a belief in American exceptionalism that most non-Americans simply find not credible."

But while the neoconservatives erred in presuming that American power would always be seen as legitimate, Fukuyama errs in arguing that this power can be made legitimate through various international institutions. Take, for example, his discussion of nation-building. He notes that it is exceptionally difficult to establish the domestic institutions necessary to prevent a nascent democracy from descending into chaos. The process often requires a political solution within the target country, and "in the absence of internal political demand for reform, it may never be possible to get the institutions right."

What does this say? That we should expect nation-building to fail. Fukuyama

practically admits as much: "The record in nation-building is mixed: there are a few successes and a large number of failures; and where the successes occurred, they required an extraordinary level of effort and attention."

And yet Fukuyama clings to the belief that success is possible, perhaps even likely, but for the fact that "the world today does not have enough international institutions that can confer legitimacy on collective action." Accordingly, he explains, "a realistic solution to the problem of international action that is both effective and legitimate will lie in the creation of new institutions and the adaptations of existing ones." Specifically, the United States should seek to "promote a world populated by a large number of overlapping and sometimes competitive international institutions," a system that he calls multi-multilateralism.

HE NOTES THAT IT IS DIFFICULT TO ESTABLISH THE DOMESTIC INSTITUTIONS NECESSARY TO PREVENT A NASCENT DEMOCRACY FROM DESCENDING INTO CHAOS.

The Clinton administration's interventions in Bosnia and later Kosovo provide the model for Fukuyama's strategic vision of realistic Wilsonianism exercised in a multi-multilateral order. This is an exceedingly weak reed on which to base a new theory of international relations. For one, neither intervention was an unmitigated success. Undeterred by this niggling detail, Fukuyama focuses on the extent to which "[t]he NATO alliance...provided legitimacy for military intervention in a way that the United Nations could not."

But legitimacy is not a stamp of approval. Besides, there already is a system for affording legitimacy to military intervention: it's known as the national interest. When institutions reflect or convey common interests among nations, the institutions can attain a superficial durability. But this illusion that multilateral institutions can supercede the national interests of sovereign states is shattered the moment that those interests come into conflict. In short, even if the next

intervention is sanctioned by *some* international institution, this does not imply that it will be universally welcomed.

Consider the Kosovo case. NATO's endorsement provided cover for politicians on both sides of the Atlantic, but it did not confer international legitimacy. The Indians and Chinese took umbrage at what Fukuyama calls "forum shopping," whereby the U.S. and other powers sought out the international institution that was most likely to endorse the military campaign, but that opposition was limited to strongly worded letters of protest and editorials calling for a restoration in the balance of power to rein in American might. The Russians, on the other hand, reacted in a more "traditional" manner, sending troops to seize the airfield in Pristina, Kosovo. A wider war may have been averted only by a British commander's

willingness to defy a superior officer openly. When U.S. general and NATO commander Wesley Clark ordered Sir Michael Jackson, commander of the NATO peacekeeping force in Kosovo, to block forcibly the Russian entry into Kosovo, Jackson refused, reportedly telling Clark: "I'm not going to start the Third World War for you."

This case of insubordination revealed the cold, calculating logic that does, and should, govern any military intervention: do the rewards justify the risks? The answer has little to do with what institutions have conferred their stamp of legitimacy upon it.

Fukuyama curiously scorns "respect for traditional sovereignty" as "a realist position" because it is not "compatible with what is in the end a revolutionary American foreign policy agenda." But this is hardly a knock on realism. As the top dog in the international system, the United States should not wish to adopt a revolutionary foreign policy agenda that would overturn the current order.

Meanwhile, when Fukuyama contends that “the most important way that American power can be exercised [is] through the ability of the United States to shape international institutions” it is not at all clear how this can be done in practice, particularly in those institutions from which the United States has been systematically excluded. Lacking the means to barge into such groups, how will those nations that engaged in forum shopping in the late 1990s react when the Shanghai Cooperation Organization’s confers “legitimacy” upon a Russian-led intervention in Belarus or Ukraine? The limits of Fukuyama’s multi-multilateral order are even more starkly revealed by a hypothetical case of ASEAN sanctioning Beijing’s re-annexation of Taiwan.

Fukuyama cannot reconcile himself to a form of realism grounded in state sovereignty and national interest, and in this respect he is not that different from traditional Wilsonians. In the end, Fukuyama’s “realistic Wilsonianism” is neither realistic (from the standpoint of efficacy) nor realist (from the standpoint of Hans Morgenthau, George Kennan, and Kenneth Waltz).

The chief disappointment with the book is found elsewhere, however. While it is encouraging to see a well-respected scholar assail some of the neo-conservatives’ most sacred of sacred cows, it is disheartening to learn that Fukuyama had doubts about the Iraq War well before the war was launched and that he kept these feelings to himself. Having been so strong an advocate of regime change in Iraq in the late 1990s, Fukuyama’s relative silence in the fall and winter of 2002 and 2003 implied support for the whole misguided venture. We can only speculate as to what might have happened had he lent his voice to the antiwar effort, and we can only hope that he will not choose to stay on the sidelines the next time around. ■

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[*What Jesus Meant*, Garry Wills, Viking, 143 pages]

The Gospel According to Garry

by Jeremy Lott

FOLLOWING PRESIDENT BUSH’S 2004 victory over the junior senator from Massachusetts, the *New York Times* op-ed page let out a primal scream. Thomas Friedman, for instance, wailed that evangelicals had used their “religious energy to promote divisions and intolerance at home and abroad” rather than working to turn the world into a giant pancake. But guest columnist Garry Wills showed the regular lineup how to really let loose. He unironically compared conservative Christians to jihadis, argued that the election signaled the end of the Enlightenment on U.S. soil, and worried that polls show that Americans now believe “more fervently in the Virgin Birth than in evolution.”

That was an interesting formulation because, in addition to being a professional popular historian, Wills is also a professional Catholic with a long and tangled history. He’s both an ex-seminarian and an ex-conservative—William F. Buckley lured him to *National Review* on the same day that Whittaker Chambers agreed to have his name added to the masthead. He is a convert to liberalism in matters political and ecclesial. Wills argues for a bigger, more muscular government that works to expand the positive rights of women, gays, minorities, and the poor, and for a church that is willing at least to relent to that advance.

His intellectual journey makes Wills attractive to a certain kind of reader. He is devout and liberal and learned and the scales have fallen away from his eyes, so he’s safe. When the *New York Times* or the *New York Review of Books* wants someone to sound off on “Catholic issues” or to chide traditional believers

about issues of religion in public life, Wills is the go-to guy.

The zeal of converts is often overstated, but Wills has it. Especially when he’s dealing with intra-church disputes, his words are barbed and he’s incapable of seeing the sense in any position that he used to hold. Once his mind has changed, so should everyone else’s, and he treats people who disagree with him to ridicule, at best.

You get a good helping of this in Wills’s latest book, *What Jesus Meant*, when he is writing about conservatives and especially when the subject is the current pope. He takes sharp issue with the notion of apostolic succession, the idea that (a) Jesus intended the found a religion; (b) by appointing “the twelve” (or “the apostles”) and giving them extraordinary powers, Jesus intended for there to be a separate priestly class that would oversee the new faith; (c) the current hierarchy of the broader Catholic Church (including the Orthodox) are legitimate heirs to that authority; and (d) the whole church shall be led, in some sense, by the successor to St. Peter, the Bishop of Rome.

This story is central to what the Catholic Church thinks about itself, but it’s all balderdash, says Wills. He fumes that Benedict XVI, when he was serving as the head of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, wrote that it is the “infallible teaching of the church that Anglican bishops and priests are fake bishops and priests, dispensing fake sacraments, because they are outside of apostolic succession. That is, they have not a lineage guaranteed by papal elections, supposedly guided by the Holy Spirit—a line in which bribery, intimidation, and imperial interference were often the deciding factors.”

Forget for a moment that Wills grossly distorts Benedict’s thought here. What’s unclear is why he should take up the cause of the Anglicans, except to use as a cudgel to beat Rome. Wills repeatedly rejects the idea that Jesus tried to found any institutional church at all—one section begins, “If Jesus did not come to establish a church, why did he

come?" Rather, the man that Wills professes as the son of God came to establish his elusive "reign." By reign, says Wills, the Gospel writers had in mind "a dynamic process, not a settled place or structure. ... It is Jesus himself, at first recognized only by a few, but extending his hold by fulfilling his mission from the Father." In other words, the Person *is* the process.

As for Jesus using lowly human agents to extend that reign, Wills balks. Ecclesial structures and the development of doctrine past about the sixth century are rejected out of hand. He explains that these things are all about "exclusion" and thus contrary to the inclusive, egalitarian Gospel that Jesus preached. So let them be anathema.

Jesus did appoint 12 apostles, but, Wills argues, they were figureheads, and the fact that they were all men was irrelevant. Yes, Peter was important, but he had little power and wasn't the

first pope, and he was married. Whenever it looks like Jesus or Paul is holding up celibacy as an ideal, according to Wills, they're either being ironic or too overtly apocalyptic for us to take them seriously.

Doctors of the church admit that it took awhile for her governance to become what it is today, what with one religion forming out of the ferment of another, spreading like kudzu throughout the Roman Empire, and its adherents being persecuted by religious leaders and civil authorities. But that isn't enough of a concession for Wills. This self-avowed Catholic intellectual says that because the words "bishop" and "priest" were not the formal titles used during the period of the writing of the New Testament, the papacy and the bishoprics are made up and contrary to the ideals of Jesus, who was against all organized religion.

The rabbi from Nazareth can be obscured in all of this polemicizing, but he's still here. In the first chapter, Wills renounces the concept of a "gentle Jesus, meek and mild," and he later spends considerable energy rebutting modern presentations of the son of man as the masculine ideal. Mel Gibson's Jesus this is not. But this also is not the Jesus of Thomas Jefferson's revised, non-miraculous New Testament, which Wills calls "not only much shorter than the real one but much duller." And it isn't merely a rehash of the findings of the small group of radical, media-savvy scholars that make up the Jesus Seminar. In fact, Wills looks at the run of historical Jesus scholarship and decides to chuck the lot of it. "The only Jesus we have," he explains, "is the Jesus of faith. If you reject the faith, there is no reason to trust anything the gospels say."

Okay, but whose faith? Catholics believe that Scripture and Tradition form a single deposit of faith. Most Protestants believe in a historic Christian idea that shapes how they read the Bible, since, after all, the church put the book together. And then there's the Garry Wills reading, which combines modern pieties with a dash of literary criticism and a

pinch of opportunistic literalism. Thus the Virgin Birth was only intended to be poetical, any passages that seem to grant the church power can be explained away, but Jesus' indictment of religious leaders and the rich contained no hyperbole whatsoever.

Because he cuts himself off from scholarship and most theology, the portrait of Jesus that Wills paints is incomplete, if interesting. It looks a lot like the one in the musical and film "Jesus Christ Superstar." You have the young pious rebel preaching against the hypocritical religion of his forbears and the religious and political establishments trying to get rid of this severe hippie. The one virtue of this portrayal of Jesus is that it doesn't try to treat him as merely a great teacher who was misunderstood and unfairly martyred. "If he was not God, he was a standing blasphemy against God," Wills writes, and on that much we can agree.

This Jesus is a lit fuse. He is harsh and unpredictable, and he rages against those things that his Father hates. He curses the priests and teachers of the law but extends forgiveness to whores and tax collectors. He overturns the tables of the moneychangers and drives sellers of cattle and fowl out of the temple with a whip, but he renounces plans to turn his reign into a political movement. And he is killed, in part, because the rulers have no idea what else to do with him.

Again, there are problems with this take. By allowing the dramatic meanings to overwhelm the deeper theological meanings, Wills divorces himself from some important truths. Judas is the most interesting and sympathetic bit player in "Jesus Christ Superstar," and Wills goes even further in *What Jesus Meant*. "Judas," Wills explains, "could not bear the knowledge of what he had done. He killed himself for having killed God. It was an act of contrition that redeems him, makes him a kind of comrade for all of us who have betrayed Jesus. He is our patron. Saint Judas." ■

Jeremy Lott is author of the forthcoming In Defense of Hypocrisy.

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[*Sands of Empire: Missionary Zeal, American Foreign Policy, and the Hazards of Global Ambition*, Robert W. Merry, Simon and Schuster, 320 pages]

History for Aspiring Imperialists

By Charles V. Peña

In *Sands of Empire*, Robert W. Merry has taken to heart philosopher George Santayana's maxim that "those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it." And what Merry wants us to remember is "if there are lessons in history, certainly one teaches that there is no such thing as a benign hegemon. Hegemonic ambition inevitably inserts the hegemon into environments that turn out to be threatening, brutal, and savage. And then, if it wants to remain a hegemon, it can no longer be benign. We don't have to look to Roman history for this lesson; America's current Iraqi adventure serves nicely."

As alternatives to hegemony—rooted in President Theodore Roosevelt being "thrilled to the idea of American empire on the British model, with American boys spreading national power to whatever corners of the world were still available for colonization"—Merry examines four other strains of U.S. foreign policy: liberal or humanitarian interventionism, conservative isolationism, liberal isolationism, and conservative interventionism.

As a historical analysis of American foreign policy and the current state of affairs with the wars on terrorism and in Iraq, Merry's book is excellent. He shows us how Theodore Roosevelt's ambitions of American empire were tempered by a brutal guerrilla war in the Philippines that left 4,000 Americans and 200,000 Filipinos dead. Chastened only for a time, U.S. foreign policy gave way to World War I and Woodrow Wilson's grandiose

vision of a world order with America at the center and based on the notion of humanitarian interventionism—that the exercise of U.S. military power could be justified by the humanitarian needs of a foreign country rather than vital U.S. interests. The period between World War I and World War II saw the emergence of conservative isolationism as espoused by Robert Taft: "We should be prepared to defend our own shores, but we should not undertake to defend the ideals of democracy in foreign countries." Conservative isolationism became a victim of World War II, which resulted in conservative interventionism and the Cold War strategy of containment based on using force to protect America's vital interests, defend the West from Soviet expansionism, and maintain a global balance of power vis-à-vis the Soviet Union and communism. Liberal isolationism was the natural product of the Vietnam War and the view that America was waging an immoral war.

Showing that history does indeed repeat itself, Merry correctly points to the latter days of the Bush 41 administration and the November 1992 decision to send troops into Somalia to aid its starving inhabitants as the rebirth of Wilsonianism and humanitarian intervention. The Clinton presidency inherited and expanded this mission, which went terribly awry on the streets of Mogadishu in October 1993, when three Black Hawk helicopters were shot down and 18 American soldiers were killed, as depicted in the movie "Black Hawk Down." Instead of learning a fundamental reality of humanitarian intervention—that it rarely remains humanitarian—the Clinton administration embraced Wilsonianism with its Balkans policy, including the bombing of Kosovo. Merry uses the Balkans to highlight a second fundamental reality of a humanitarian interventionist foreign policy grounded in moralistic impulses: "inevitably it exposes a selective morality."

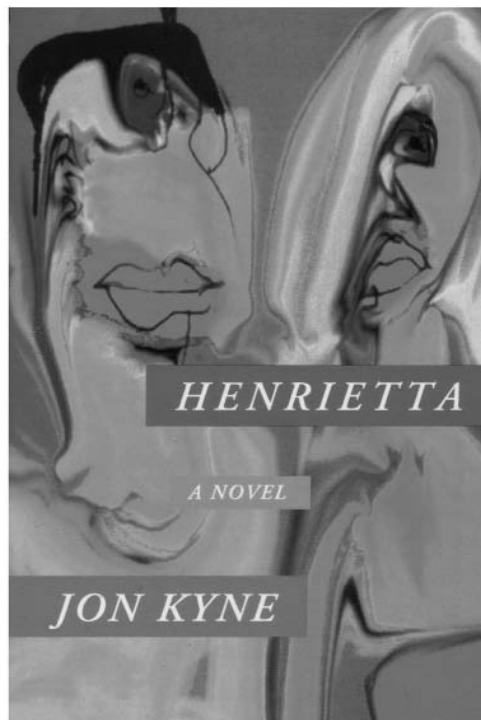
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Jeffrey Hart
National Review



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Merry's chapter "The Neoconservatives" is one of the best, most concise analyses of neconservatism. He makes the case that the neoconservatives—who have captured the current administration's foreign policy—"aren't really conservative at all," and he traces the history of neoconservative thinking and proponents to show that "[t]here is no distinctly neoconservative bedrock of postulates or assumptions that provide a consistency of advocacy." Thus, Merry exposes an often overlooked aspect of neoconservative foreign policy: it includes both a moralistic humanitarian strain and a global hegemonic strain. The genius, if you will, of the neoconservatives is that although they would disagree with liberal internationalists about the means, such as the United Nations and cultivating the support of the international community, they both arrive at the same endpoint. Thus, a large number of Democrats were co-opted to support the Bush administration's Iraq policy, and we are already seeing the same phenomenon with regard to Iran.

The overarching paradigm that frames Merry's analysis is the idea that there are two ways to view the world. The first is through the prism of the Idea of Progress—which can trace its roots to early 18th-century French social philosopher Abbé Charles-Irénée Castel de Saint-Pierre—and the notion that mankind is on an inexorable progression. Merry holds up Francis Fukuyama and his essay "The End of History?" as the modern-day version of the Idea of Progress: that the demise of the Soviet Union meant Western liberal society was the natural end point in the evolution of progress. Merry contends that this has become the framework for the Bush Doctrine that spreading liberal democracy should underpin U.S. foreign policy.

The opposite of the Idea of Progress is the Cycles of History paradigm as espoused by the German intellectual Oswald Spengler, who argued that history was not about the progress of mankind from backwardness to ever

greater enlightenment but instead about the rise and fall of discrete world civilizations. Merry uses Samuel Huntington's 1993 *Foreign Affairs* article "Clash of Civilizations?" (the basis for his book *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*) to make the case that the cycle of history we find ourselves in now is a clash of civilizations between the West and Islam.

Although Merry's historical analysis is excellent, his larger argument is flawed. To begin, even if one accepts his contention that the post-9/11 world is a clash of civilizations, who is the enemy? Merry's answer is schizophrenic. In chapter 10 Merry claims that "[t]he enemy is Islam, particularly its Middle Eastern Core." He reasserts this in chapter 12 by stating that "we are indeed at war with Islam," but also talks about "the civilizational threat posed by radical Islam." Finally, in chapter 13 Merry says that "[t]he enemy is Islamic fundamentalism" yet also speaks of "America's war against Islamist radicalism." But exactly who the enemy is matters: radical Islam or Islamist radicalism is represented by al-Qaeda, Islamic fundamentalism is represented by the mullahs in Tehran, and Islam is the more than one billion Muslims in the world. Put another way: al-Qaeda attacked the United States on 9/11, so why would America want to wage a wider war against Islam, thereby driving more Muslims into the ranks of al-Qaeda?

In chapter 11, "War," Merry argues that "the current clash poses an entirely different kind of threat. The twin forces of history and culture suggest that the approaches that worked in the earlier struggle [the Cold War] aren't likely to work in the latter one." But in chapter 12 he contradicts himself by lamenting, "What's remarkable about America's foreign policy debate following 9/11 is how little focus was placed on the strain of thinking [conservative interventionism] that guided America to victory in the Cold War." The reason that Merry ends up going back to the future is that his paradigm is binary: on or off,

black or white, good or bad, us or them. Such thinking means that there are only two alternatives and only one choice that can be made from those alternatives. Thus, if the Idea of Progress is wrong, then the Cycles of History must be right. But such thinking does not allow for the possibility that both the Idea of Progress—promoting democracy—and the Cycles of History—a civilizational war with the Islamic world—are influencing current U.S. foreign policy. So one is not a counterweight to the other. And they can both be wrong.

The logic of Merry's analysis presumes that al-Qaeda attacked the United States because they want to destroy America. The end of history or a clash of civilizations are simply different constructs for how to think about and confront the threat. But both miss the fundamental fact that al-Qaeda's struggle is first and foremost a battle for the soul of Islam. Thus, it is an internal struggle where the United States is, by and large, an external player. As such, America is not in a position to win the war. So Merry is correct to argue, "the dual imperative is to do everything possible to protect American lives from the ravages of terrorism while avoiding actions, to the greatest extent possible, that are sure to inflame anti-Western passions in the world of Islam." However, what he does not grasp is that interventionism, either conservative or liberal, is a large part of the problem, not the solution. His prescription for conservative interventionism—and the proposition that the U.S. should prop up strongman dictators, corrupt royal families, and military bureaucracies who "are seeking to destroy or contain Islamic fundamentalism"—is part of what has created our terrorist problem and would only make it worse. ■

Charles V. Peña is a senior fellow with the Coalition for a Realistic Foreign Policy, analyst for MSNBC, and author of the forthcoming book Winning the Un-War: A New Strategy for the War on Terrorism (Potomac Books).

The Hell Where Youth and Laughter Go



A recent *Newsweek* cover story on the war's most fearless doctor brought back painful memories. As a very young boy I was on the receiving end of

Anglo-American bombing while I lived in Tatoi, a northern suburb of Athens where the royal summer palace was situated and next to which my family had a house. Near the summer palace lay a tiny Greek military airport occupied by the German Luftwaffe. By 1942, aged six, I learned what collateral damage was all about.

Not that we called it that, back then. It was called bad luck. Just as the French farmers in Normandy cursed the off-shore batteries that turned their houses into bombed-out hovels before the D-Day landing—forget what the movies show—so did the Greeks living near Tatoi fulminate against those dropping bombs on them in defense of liberty, democracy, and freedom. Hollywood types don't understand what bombs can do to humans, so they show children cheering and adults lifting their glasses to their unseen benefactors, but the truth is somewhat different. The earth trembles, men and women lose their bowels, the noise scares the living daylight out of one, the screams of the wounded remain in the psyche. Even worse is the weeping of the survivors over lost loved ones after the sirens have screeched the all-clear. One thing is for sure: no one looks up to the sky and thanks Ike or Winnie. To the contrary.

These are the facts. The rest is Hollywood and neocon propaganda. Those doing the fighting, of course, have it much worse. As General Sherman said, war is hell, but successive generations with abundant evidence before them still persist in fighting.

Why men fight is a moral issue of great importance, especially today, when non-fighters instigate wars that

others fight for them. "I adore war. It's like a big picnic without the objectlessness of a picnic. I have never been so well or so happy," said the poet Julian Grenfell before dying at the western front. Grenfell was killed early on, before disillusionment had the chance to set in. That other wonderful poet, Harvard-educated Alan Seeger, serving with the French Foreign Legion, told his mother that "every minute here is worth weeks of ordinary experience." He perished two years later at the Somme. I guess some poets have a death wish.

Not the gallant Siegfried Sassoon, who survived a nervous breakdown to fight again and live to a ripe old age. Here's what he had to say about war: "I knew a simple soldier boy / Who grinned at life in empty joy, / Slept soundly through the lonesome dark, / And whistled early with the lark. / In winter trenches, cowed and glum, / With crumps and lice and lack of rum, / He put a bullet through his brain. / No one spoke of him again. / You smug-faced crowds with kindling eye / Who cheer when soldier lads march by, / Sneak home and pray you'll never know / The hell where youth and laughter go."

Hear, hear. Incidentally, when the campaign against French fries was on, I couldn't help thinking how wrong the sofa-samurais had it. Did you know that from Aug. 4, 1914 to Aug. 29, 1914, 260,000 French soldiers were killed without advancing the front by a single foot? "The more men died, the more urgently a cause had to be found for them to die for." Does it sound familiar? Like staying the course?

So why do men fight? The question of motivation of the Wehrmacht, the unity of the German army sustained to the

bitter end, had little to do with political indoctrination. (That applied to elite Waffen SS units only.) It had to do with the social organization of army units. A captured sergeant laughed when his interrogators inquired about the politics of his men. "When you ask this question, I realize well that you have no idea what makes a soldier fight. If we think at all it is about Heimat [home]. We fight for each other ..."

Needless to say, modern-day weapons make for unheroic deaths. Men are blown to tatters. Paul Fussell writes in *Doing Battle* how red-hot metal tore into his body, while the man next to him turned a whitish green while letting out a subdued groan before dying.

High-explosive projectiles scatter dreadful evidence of mortality. Here's William Manchester landing on Iwo Jima: "You tripped over strange viscera fifteen feet long, over bodies cut in half at the waist. Legs and arms, and heads bearing only necks, lay fifty feet from the closest torsos. The stench of burning flesh was everywhere..." Flying fragments of the human body themselves cause wounds. Manchester's father had a piece of one of his men's tibia buried in his back. Others were hit by flying arms and were temporarily stunned.

But the boys back home tell us to stick with it. Bush says that despite more tough fighting, progress is being made. After all, the mission has been accomplished.

Papa Hemingway comes to mind. In *A Farewell to Arms*, Frederick Henry has had enough. "I had seen nothing sacred, and the things that were glorious had no glory ... abstract words such as honor and courage were obscene beside the names of villages, the names of rivers ..."

Read that you neocons and hang your heads in shame. But I won't hold my breath until you do. ■

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